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INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

MARCH, 1988

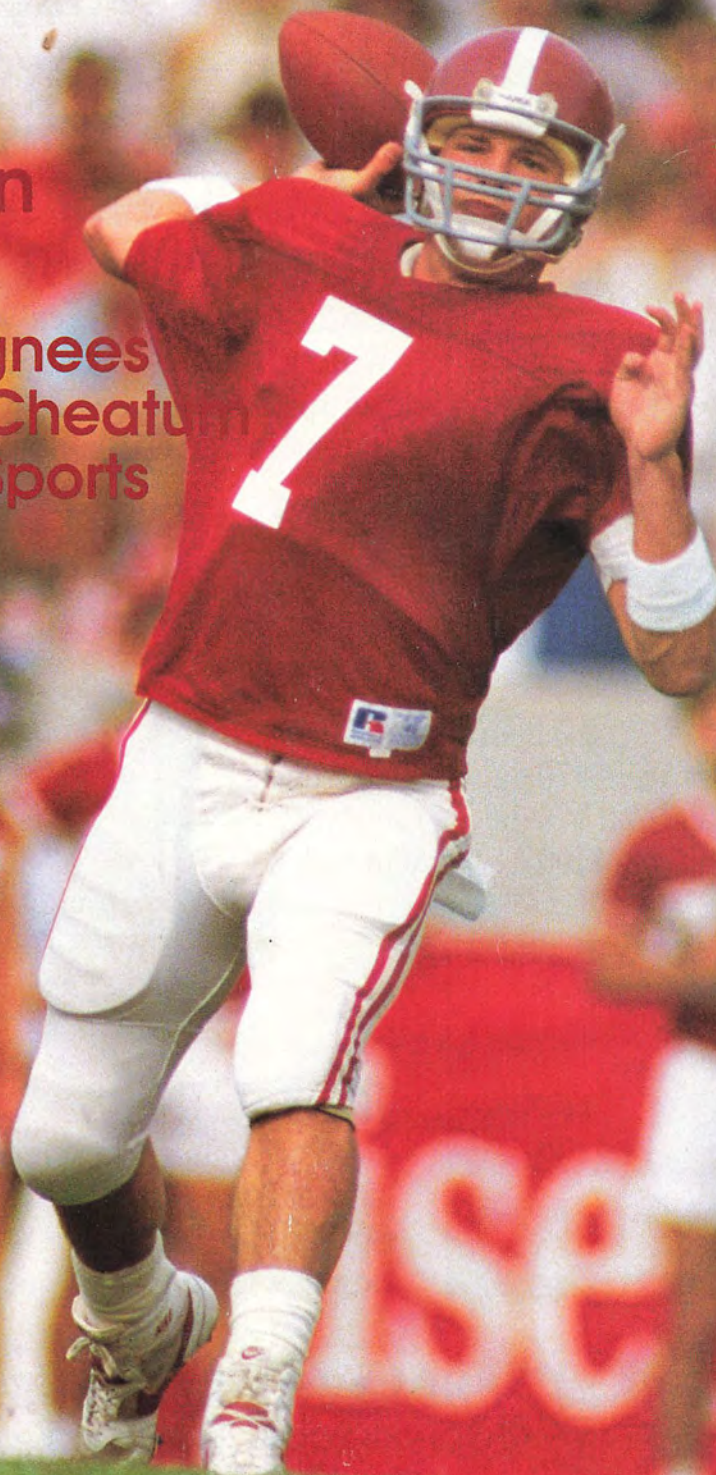
VOLUME 10, NUMBER 3

Inside:

Jeff Dunn

Also

- Prep Signees
 - Melvin Cheatum
 - Spring Sports
- And More



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P.O. Box 6104, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-6104
AC 205 345-5074

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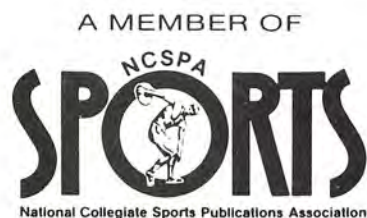
(205) 277-1920

Publishing Information

'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide (USPS 489-470; ISSN 0195-0975) is published monthly for ten months from August to May by College Sports Publications, Inc., 408 20th Ave., Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 35401. Editorial office is located at 408 20th Ave., Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide, P.O. Box 6104, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35486-6104.

Second class postage paid at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and at additional mailing office. Subscription rate is \$30.00 per year. Foreign subscriptions \$5.00 per additional. Change of address: Six weeks advance notice, and old address as well as new required. Address all correspondence to: Post Office Box 6104, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35486-6104. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or photographs unless accompanied by return postage. Copyright © 1988 College Sports Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.



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The Latest Additions

by David White

Alabama football adds a large, quality class

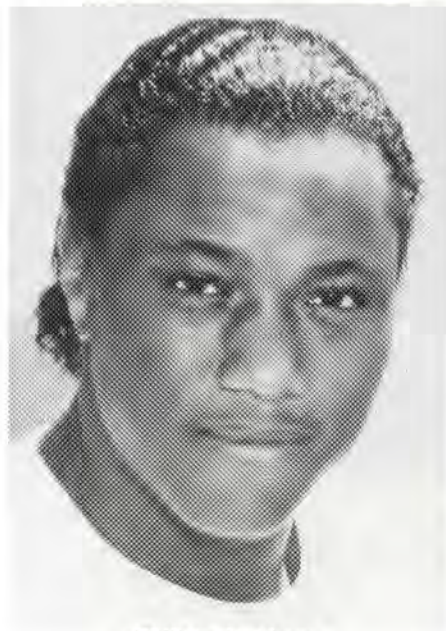
For the past few weeks and for the next few weeks the self-proclaimed experts will be judging 1988 college football recruiting results. Of course the college coaches who recruited the players have to depend only on such information as their knowledge of the game of football, their specific needs, and what they have seen of these players on films and videotapes and in person.

No wonder, then, their assessments might differ from those of the recruiting analysts. Alabama coaches believe they have had a good year. Of course, like all coaches, they temper judgment with the admonition that any one recruiting class can't be judged until the players begin playing, perhaps two or three years later.

Certainly there were losses. Alabama (as most major colleges) recruited in the neighborhood of 85 players and signed (as of this writing) 28. It does appear that in the race for a large number of top prospects Bama finished in that worst of spots: second. The Tide was runnerup for perhaps a dozen of the nation's best, including junior college defensive tackle Demetrius Hill (Mississippi State), defensive tackle Chester McGlockton (Clemson), defensive tackle Randy Hall and linebacker Shazzon Bradley (both Tennessee), tailback Willie McClendon (Florida), wide receiver Rodney McCoy (Georgia), tight end Scott Long (Arkansas), defensive tackle Diondri Clark (Florida State) and quarterback Corey Lewis (Auburn).

An oddity in this year's recruiting is the few players in Alabama in which Bama and Auburn went head-to-head. The Tigers picked up Ed King of Phenix City, Richard Shea of Mountain Brook and Herbert Casey of Foley, with Alabama apparently not even finishing second on any of the three. Alabama finished ahead of Auburn for Charlie Dare, Darren Greenwood, Johnny Howard, Derrick Oden and Brent Welborn. (Auburn made an early pass at Robert Jones, then backed off Alabama's Mr. Football since he was Bobby Humphrey's cousin, but the Tigers apparently did not even recruit Danny Woodson, whose brother, Lamar, is a tight end at Auburn.)

Two players who said publicly that Ala-



William Amelong

bama was number one inexplicably cancelled visits the week they were scheduled: Casey, whose change of heart came during the recruiting moratorium period, and Tennessee linebacker Todd Collins, who eventually elected to sign where his brother plays, Georgia.

(These sketches do not include which schools Alabama's signees picked the Tide over. That's in no small part because of many such reports on other players who have listed Alabama as one of the schools they turned down when it is known that in some of those cases Alabama did not offer scholarships to those players.)

And so the 1988 recruiting season is just about history. And here is a look at the newest members of the Crimson Tide:

William Amelong, is a 6-3, 235-pound linebacker out of Long Beach (California) City College. He will have two years of eligibility at Alabama. In six games as a sophomore Amelong had 51 tackles and five quarterback sacks. His limited play was due to a knee injury that did not require surgery. As a freshman, Bill was in on 100 tackles and nine quarterback sacks in 10 games. He was a unanimous all-conference as a freshman and honorable mention All-America. As a sophomore his sprained knee held him back a bit but he earned All-South Coast Conference honors. His junior college coach, Will Shaw, calls him "very physical." He runs a 4.7 40 and bench presses more than 500 pounds. Amelong prepped for Coach Al

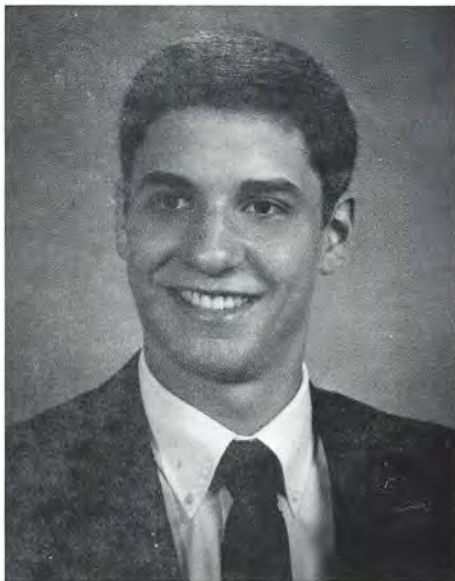
Taylor at Wilson High in Los Angeles, where he was also a top shot put man on the track team.

Steve Busky, 6-6, 210, of Suitland, Maryland, was an all-metro tight end out of Bishop-McNamara High in Washington, D.C. In his senior season he caught 26 passes for 478 yards. He also played defensive end. Busky is projected as a tight end for the Tide and should be a big part of Offensive Coordinator Homer Smith's plans in future years as Smith is a big advocate of using the tight end in his game plan. He runs a 4.65 40 and has the great reach, but will need more weight. He played for Coach Frank Neitzky.

Mike Campbell, 6-1, 185, defensive back out of Birmingham Pinson Valley, has been labeled "a workaholic" by his prep coach, Phillip Baker. He played quarterback, tailback, wide receiver and linebacker, as well as defensive back his senior season. He also averaged 41 yards as a punter. Primarily because he was used in so many spots he didn't earn post season honors, but he had an opportunity to impress Alabama coaches when he was in the Tide's football camp last summer. Bama coaches liked his speed, agility, intelligence and toughness. As a sophomore and junior his prep coach was Ken Walker, who served as a graduate assistant coach for the Tide this year. He's also a top baseball player. Campbell runs a 4.5 40, has a 33-inch vertical leap, and benches 300.

Chip Chester, 6-2, 185, was an all-state selection as punter in Florida's largest prep classification at Panama City Mosley. He averaged 42.3 yards per punt his senior season with minimal return yardage. He also handled placekicking and played free safety. Although Tide coaches have indicated they will not chance him as a defensive back, he turned in 57 tackles and two interceptions last season. He scored 114 kicking points throughout his career. He played for Coach George Cochran. Best guess is that Chester will be redshirted during Chris Mohr's final year as Bama's punter.

Chris Cochran, 6-3, 220, was chosen as the Player of the Year in the greater Memphis area. Cochran is projected as either an inside or outside linebacker. As a prep senior he recorded 56 solo tackles and had seven sacks for Coach Ken Netherland's Germantown High School. He was also his team's long snapper. He runs a 4.7 40. Cochran certainly comes from an athletic family, his father, Richard Sr., having won the bronze medal in the discus at the 1960 Olympics in Rome.

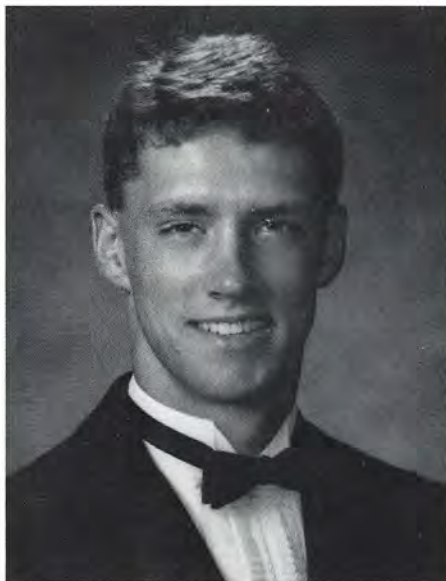


Steve Busky

(Chris also throws the discus for his track team). His father played football at Missouri and his brother played at Florida State. He will play in the Tennessee-Kentucky All-Star game.

Eric Curry, 6-6, 210, has those Ted Hendricks characteristics at outside linebacker; sort of a Stork II out of Thomasville (Georgia) High. The *Macon Telegraph* rated Curry the number five player in Georgia this past year and he was defensive player of the year in his district. He will play in both the Florida-Georgia and the Georgia North-South all-star games. He is considered to be an impact player. He runs a 4.75 40 and benches 295. He played for Coach Mike Hodges. He is also an outstanding basketball player.

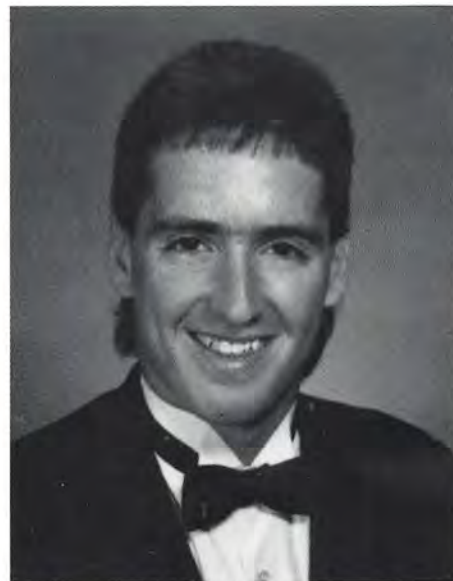
Charlie Dare, 6-5, 302, is the biggest of Tide signees. Dare was an all-state performer



Mike Campbell

on the offensive line for Coach Bill Bacon at Enterprise this past season. Generally regarded as the number two prospect in the state, he has also played on the defensive line, but projects strictly as an offensive player in college. He graded over 80 percent in all 13 Enterprise games this year. Dare says he has a couple of goals: to start as a freshman and to be an All-America two years. He runs a 5.1 40 and benches 380. Dare has lived in Alabama for only a few years and has gone to football camp at Oklahoma since he was in the eighth grade. He was a second team prep All-America. His father, Bob, played with the Baltimore Colts. Dare also plays basketball.

Donnie Finkley, 6-0, 175, is a wide receiver out of Fairhope. As a senior, Finkley caught 43 passes for 920 yards and eight



Chip Chester

touchdowns. As a junior he had 44 receptions for 800 yards and six touchdowns. He was second team all-state. Finkley originally committed to Ole Miss but changed his mind and went with Alabama. Finkley is a big addition to a position that needs more depth. He runs a 4.5 40. He's also a fine basketball player. He played football for Coach Joe Dean.

Charles Gardner, 6-3, 205, was a pleasant surprise for Bill Curry. Gardner combines both size and speed as a defensive back. He was All-Pacific Coast, All-Los Angeles, all-state, and All-America. Gardner was a national recruit, coming out of what is considered California's finest high school football program, Carson, which was ranked 10th in the nation on the strength of its 11-1 record. He runs a 4.6 40. He is also a high hurdler on



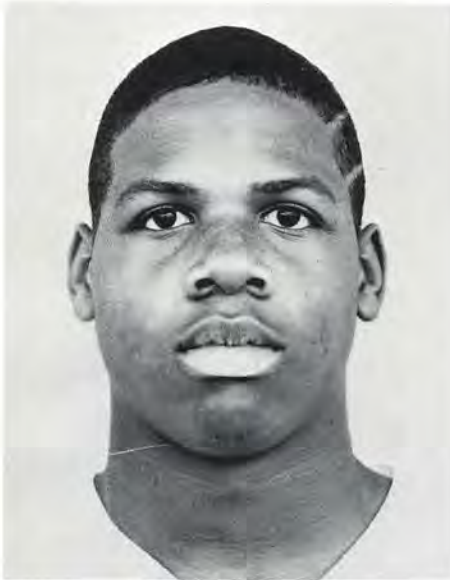
Chris Cochran



Eric Curry



Charlie Dare



Charles Gardner

the track team. His prep football coach, Gene Vollnogle, calls him "a specimen."

Darren Greenwood, 6-0, 185, was a quarterback and defensive back in high school, but is a versatile athlete and projects as a wide receiver or running back as well in college. Greenwood is regarded as one of the best all around athletes in the state. As a wishbone quarterback for Coach Jim Hubbard at Lanett High School, he gained 900 yards rushing. Greenwood runs the 40 in 4.47, and bench presses 320 pounds. He was a four-year letterman, three-year starter and two-year all-state performer. He also plays basketball and runs track.

Craig Harris, 6-1, 195, is a hard-nosed runner out of Panama City (Florida) Mosley. (We inadvertently had his size wrong in our look at prep prospects earlier this year.) He



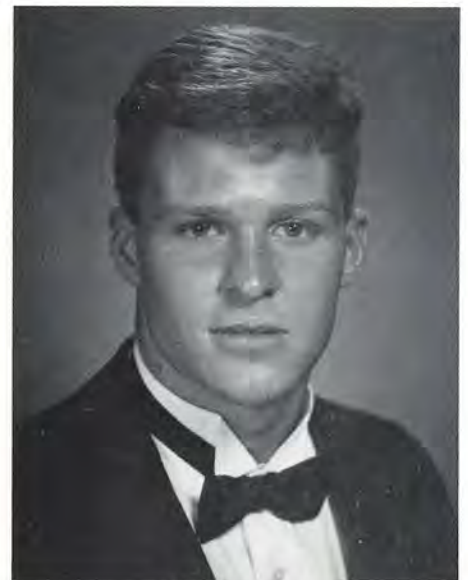
Darren Greenwood

rushed for 1,050 yards and scored 16 touchdowns this past season. He had an 85-yard touchdown this season to go along with his 15 others. He was an all-state selection for the year. Harris runs a 4.4 40 and bench presses 350. He was called "a terrific athlete" by *Gator Bait*, a publication which covers Florida athletics and which also had Harris on its Hot 100. He played for Coach George Cochran.

Rodney Helton, 6-2, 220, had an outstanding year both ways at Knoxville (Tennessee) Central. He played both fullback and linebacker for his uncle, Coach Joel Helton, and piled up some impressive numbers. He rushed for 746 yards (6.2 per carry) and 10 touchdowns and had five others called back. At linebacker (his projected position) he registered 96 solo tackles, 60 assists, four caused fumbles, three fumbles recovered, and three interceptions. He was a four-year starter who never missed a game. Helton runs the 40 in 4.7 and benches 400. A two-year all-state performer, he will play in the Tennessee-Kentucky all-star game. He is also a three-year letterman in baseball.

Martin Houston, 6-0, 236, a fullback out of Cherokee County in Centre, rushed for 1,136 yards (9.8 per carry). He was Class 4A Player of the Year as a senior and all-state as both a junior and senior. He was a three-year starter. He also played linebacker for Coach Bobby Johnson's squad. Throughout his career he rushed for 2,356 yards and 19 touchdowns. He runs a 4.7 40 to go along with a 415 pound bench. He also has a 3.6 grade point and a 20 on his ACT.

John Howard, 6-4, 255, is a two-way tackle out of Jess Lanier in Bessemer. Howard is a three-year starter and two of those



Craig Harris

years he went both ways. He has also played offensive guard and may wind up there at Alabama. He was also his team's deep snapper. His high school coach, Carrol Cox, said he has tremendous potential. He benches 360. He was an all-state performer. Howard is an A student.

Robert Jones, 5-10, 185, was a standout at Parker High where he rushed for a Birmingham prep record 1,989 yards and 31 touchdowns and was named "Mr. Football" in Alabama this past season for Coach Cecil Leonard. He rushed for over 200 yards in five games as a senior, including a city record 371 in one contest. As a junior and senior he accounted for 3,400 yards rushing, another 1,000 yards in pass receptions and kick returns and 57 touchdowns. He was All-Southern. He runs a 4.5 40. He's Bobby



Rodney Helton



Martin Houston



John Howard

Humphrey's first cousin.

Keith Neighbors, 6-1, 195, is a three-year starter out of Huntsville High. He played offensive guard and center on offense and linebacker on defense for Coach Greg Patterson. He was also his team's deep snapper. He posted 70 tackles this past season despite missing three games. He is expected to move over to outside linebacker in college. Neighbors runs a 4.7 40 and benches 285. He has a solid legacy to follow; both his father, Billy, and his brother, Wes, were stars at Alabama.

Derrick Oden, 6-2, 215, could become a tremendous asset in the Crimson Tide's defensive plans. Oden, a three-year starter for Coach Skipper Clements at Tuscaloosa Hillcrest, recorded 140 tackles from his inside linebacker slot this season, and also had four fumble recoveries and two interceptions. He



Derrick Oden



Robert Jones

also played tailback, rushing for 520 yards and scoring four touchdowns and also passed for one. As a junior he made 126 tackles and rushed for 722 yards. He was a two-year all-state performer. He benches over 400 pounds and aims to reach the 500 pound plateau by next fall. Oden runs a 4.6 40. His father, Richard, played for Alabama State and the Los Angeles Rams.

Derrick Owens, 5-11, 185, was Player of the Year in the big schools classification in New York. Owens, out of North Rockland High School in Haverstraw, rushed for 1,719 yards and scored 31 touchdowns his senior season. He also caught 31 passes for 586 yards and returned punts and kickoffs. Not only did he have superior stats, but he also carried the ball 259 times without a fumble. He led his team to a 10-0 record and an un-



Derrick Owens



Keith Neighbors

precedented third straight Colgate Cup, given to the top team in the district. He personally outscored every team on North Rockland's schedule as a senior. He holds county records for points (194), rushing yards, rushing touchdowns (26) and touchdowns. He played for Coach Joe Casarella. Owens is also an outstanding track sprinter and plays baseball.

Mike Ramil, 6-7, 265, defensive tackle out of Fullerton (California) Junior College, is already enrolled at Alabama, taking part in the offseason program, and will be in spring practice. Ramil was an All-California choice this past season, as he turned in 60 tackles, five sacks and a pass interception. He played his high school football at Norco High in Corona, California, for Coach Gary Campbell and originally signed with California. How-



Mike Ramil



Bragg Rockwell

ever, he decided he did not want to play there and entered junior college. He is an outstanding student.

Bragg Rockwell, 6-2, 200, follows a solid Alabama football legacy at outside linebacker. Rockwell played outside linebacker for Coach Joe Dean at Fairhope and recorded 80 tackles, had eight quarterbacks, and caused three fumbles. Rockwell is considered to have good ability combined with a great competitive spirit. He's a three-year letterman and two-year starter and was all-area. He runs a 4.7 40 and benches 285. Bragg is considered the best of the Rockwells according to his brother Randy, who just finished his fine career as a Bama outside linebacker. He is an excellent student.

John Sullins, 6-2, 218, was a *USA Today* honorable mention All-America at inside



John Sullins

linebacker for Coach Jimmy Arrington at Oxford, Mississippi, High. Sullins averaged 15 tackles a game from his position. He also played offense, catching three touchdown passes as a tight end and rushing for 770 yards and scored 96 points when he was switched to fullback in midseason. He also averaged over 40 yards as a punter. He was all-state and has been selected for the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Game. As a junior he was an all-state performer in Alabama at Sulligent, where his father was head coach.

Derrek Warren, 6-3, 240, became a pretty hot prospect when he moved from offensive tackle to tight end after third game of the season for Pensacola Washington. After the switch Warren caught five passes for 262 yards (that's 52 yards per catch) and three touchdowns. Warren runs a 4.6 40 and

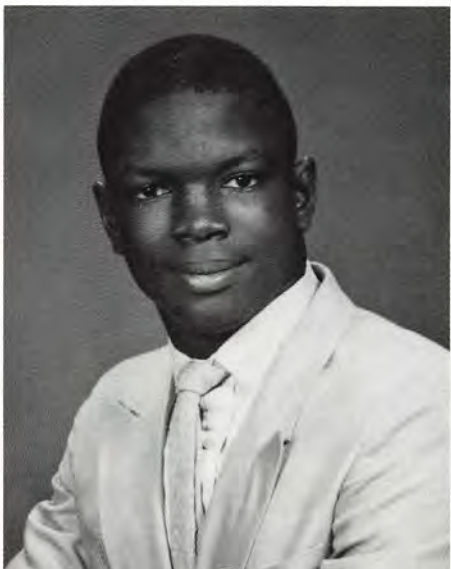


Derrick Warren

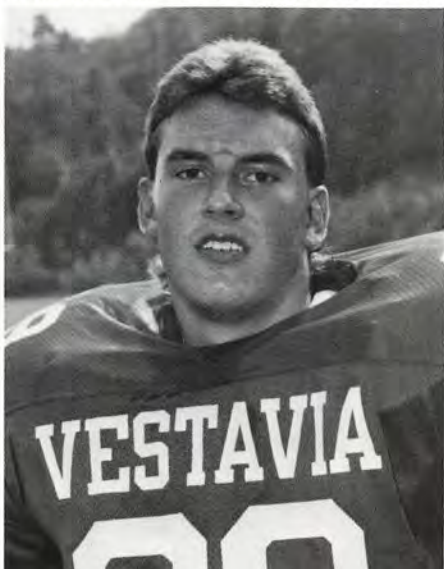
benches 305. He played for Coach Jimmy Nichols. He is also a fine baseball player and an excellent student.

Eric Washington, 6-3, 185, is out of Miami South High which is the same high school Bama's Derrick Thomas attended. Washington played defensive end in high school, but is expected to be moved to strong safety in college. Washington is considered a real winner by his high school coach, Sam Miller, who pointed out that "Eric put a lot of pressure on opposing quarterbacks. Teams ran away from him, but he would run them down across the field." He runs a 4.6 40 and is also his team's starting center in basketball. He's an honor student.

Brent Welborn, 6-6, 235, will be looked over at the tight end spot. Welborn is considered one of the top offensive line prospects in



Eric Washington



Brent Welborn



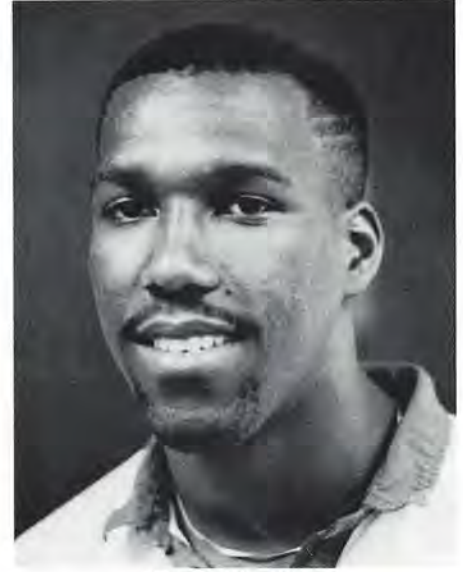
Billy Whitehill



George Wilson



Prince Wimbley



Danny Woodson

the South. He earned all-state and All-Southern honors at Vestavia High for Coach Buddy Anderson, where he was an offensive tackle. Brent is also an outstanding basketball and baseball performer. His father, Ron, played for Bobby Bowden at Howard College (now Samford University). He runs a 4.8 40 and benches 300.

Billy Whitehill, 6-5, 280, was the first player to verbally commit to Alabama out of Saginaw, Texas. Whitehill was considered one of the South's top defensive lineman and another big bonus to this year's signing class. Over his last two seasons Whitehill had 180 tackles, 18 quarterback sacks, 11 caused fumbles, and made 22 hits for negative yardage. In 1985 he was district sophomore of the year. He played for Coach Blaine Springston. He runs a 5.2 40.

George Wilson, 6-2, 245, another of the state's top offensive line prospects was a three-year starter at center for Jess Lanier in Bessemer. Wilson injured his right hand during the season but learned how to snap with his left hand. According to his coach, Carrol Cox, Wilson is "a fantastic player." He was also an outstanding prep linebacker and defensive tackle. He was an all-state performer. He is the son of former Tide running back Butch Wilson. George is an excellent student. He runs a 4.9 40 and benches 320.

Prince Wimbley, 5-8, 166, is another Miami signee for the Tide. He started his first seven games at running back for Southridge, but moved to wide receiver for the last three. He rushed for 687 yards on 93 carries (7.4 average) and scored nine times from the tailback slot. His high school coach, Jerry Hughes, considered him the best athlete on the team. "He has great speed, great hands

and quick feet and is a very disciplined player," he said. As a junior in five games he rushed for 543 yards and five touchdowns. He was on *Gator Bait's* Hot 100 in Florida. He runs a 4.45 40. His father, Prince Sr., is a native of Millry, Alabama.

Danny Woodson, 6-2, 205, could be a top notch performer in the future for Bama. At quarterback last season, Woodson completed 62 of 104 passes (59.6 percent) for 1,207 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also

rushed for 797 yards and eight touchdowns. Woodson is a four-year starter for Coach William Jessie out of LeFlore High School in Mobile and threw passes to Auburn wide receiver Lawyer Tillman and Auburn tight end Lamar Woodson (who is also his brother) his freshman season. Woodson combines great strength and speed to put up his all-star numbers. He was also his team's punter and placekicker. Woodson has 4.4 40 speed and benches 305.



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Fine Dining/Late Dining

A Busy Day On The Road

by Keith Dunnivant

Here's a look at one assistant coach's day in signing new players

Editor's Note: Although this story is a year old, compiled when Keith Dunnivant traveled with Bama Assistant Coach Jim Fuller in Dunnivant's capacity as sports editor of The Crimson-White, it is an interesting account of the work of an assistant coach on signing day.

Jim Fuller steps into the eight-seat jet, removes his blue blazer and fumbles for his sunglasses.

As the jet creases the runway of the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport, the early-morning sun pierces the rear windows and falls sharply on Fuller.

The spotlight is on the Alabama assistant football coach.

"I've done this more times than I can count," Fuller says. "But it's like being an actor on stage. If you don't have some butterflies, something's wrong with you."

Nothing is wrong with Fuller on this morning, Signing Day, 1987.

It is February 11, the first day high school seniors may sign college football scholarships, and Fuller, a stocky man with a round face and closely-cropped hair, is nervous.

To chase the butterflies from his stomach and the sleep from his eyes he walks to the front of the cabin and pours himself a cup of coffee.

"Didn't get much sleep last night," he says, lighting the first of many cigarettes.

The coach returns to his seat and pulls nine national letters of intent from a leather briefcase. These college contracts are the crucial dimension on this day of life-changing choices. Once an athlete and his parents sign on the dotted line, he is committed. So this is a day of beginnings for future stars and endings for Fuller.

After a smooth flight of almost an hour the jet touches down at Mobile's Bates Field and

MARCH '88/BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide



Jim Fuller

taxi to a stop. As soon as the wheels stop Fuller jumps out and runs toward a small terminal building. Outside a rental car waits at the coach's disposal.

"It's always like this," Fuller says, trying to catch his breath as he pulls the 1987 Cadillac away from the airport. "Run here, run there. We're always in a hurry."

O.J. Simpson had nothing on a college recruiter.

About 15 minutes later he pulls into sprawling Murphy High School. In the crowded lobby of the gymnasium six students in coats and ties fidget nervously in anticipation of a small ceremony.

But no one is more nervous than Fuller. The state's number two prospect is missing.

Keith McCants had been Fuller's prime topic of conversation a few minutes earlier.

"He's the best high school linebacker I've ever seen," Fuller had said. "Even better than Cornelius Bennett."

But, as the crowd grows and the clock nears 8:01 a.m., when signings may begin, McCants' tardiness is more of a topic than his tenaciousness.

"Where could he be?"

"Don't think he changed his mind, do you?"

"Wonder if he had car trouble?"

Finally, McCants walks into the lobby and apologizes.

"They just wouldn't leave me alone," he says. "I had seven coaches call me this morning trying to make me change my mind."

But he didn't.

With McCants' arrival the ceremony begins. Fuller takes McCants and his two other catches, linemen Ben Holt and Sam Atkins, to a long table and provides them each with a national letter of intent, an NCAA scholarship application and a sports information biography form.

"I didn't know you were going to have to take a reading and writing test," one parent jokes. The arrival of McCants has eased tensions and everything is funny.

A few minutes later the ceremony is complete. After the standard congratulations, Fuller gets in his car and goes in search of a phone booth to call recruiting coordinator Jack Flegg to confirm his triple play.

"Three down," he says as he opens the car door. "We've got some time to kill. Let's get some breakfast."

Fuller spends what will be rare down time this day sipping coffee, gulping bacon, perusing the sports pages, and talking about Alabama's turbulent transition from Ray Perkins to Bill Curry. Curry replaced Perkins on January 4, meaning the new staff had about one month to calm the fears of some prospects with cold feet.

Fuller is the only assistant retained from the Perkins staff, so he is at the heart of the school's recruiting effort. He is scheduled to sign nine of the Crimson Tide's 23 prospects today.

"I think it means a lot to the families and to the kids to have a familiar face talking to them," Fuller says. "I recruited most of these kids even before the change. You get to know them and you get to care about them."

Half an hour later he pays the bill and begins the 15-minute trek to Mary Montgomery High School in rural Mobile County. Tom Matheny, a 6-4 lineman, is set to sign with the Crimson Tide.

As Fuller walks into the school a couple of Mobile television reporters ask to talk with him on camera. "Sorry guys," Fuller says,

pulling out his NCAA handbook. "It's against the rules." A recruiter may not talk on camera or be photographed while on a recruit's high school campus.

"Sounds like a stupid rule to me," says one of the TV reporters, shaking his head.

Inside, Fuller orchestrates the same process. Matheny, his family and friends all look happy.

"We're awfully proud of you, son," one teacher says with a far-away look.

Quickly Fuller is back on the trail. It is already past 11:30 and he is scheduled to sign the state's number one prospect, Steve Webb, back at Holt High School in Tuscaloosa at 1 p.m. There is no time for socializing now.

Back at the airport the jet roars off the runway and confronts a few miles of turbulence. Fuller has switched from coffee now and grabs the first of several soft drinks that will make up much of the rest of the day's sustenance. And he talks about the recruiting process.

"Say you're a player at Holt High School," the coach hypothesizes. "I've looked at you and evaluated you, in addition to either the offense or defense. Add the head coach and the recruiting coordinator and during the course of the year a third of our staff will have a chance to look at you."

Still, sometimes they miss.

"What you're trying to do is predict how a kid will mature and what he will become in three or four years," Fuller says. "Sometimes we're dead wrong. Of all these guys we will sign today, who knows how many will turn out like we hope. Half? A Third? It's anybody's guess."

Soon the jet touches down at Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport. The coach hops in his car, speeds across town to Holt High, signs the state's top prospect, Steve Webb, unceremoniously and rushes back to the airport.

Barely half an hour after touchdown the jet is back in the air.

After a bumpy landing at Alexander City's Russell Field the coach finds a phone and calls the office.

"They were all worried to death," he says as he hops into the waiting car. "I told them I'd call after we got to Alex City and let them know we signed Steve, but they were afraid something went wrong. Everybody goes a little crazy on signing day."

At Benjamin Russell High School Fuller signs lineman Scott Bolt.

"His daddy and I used to wrestle against each other in high school," Fuller says on the way back to the airport. "These are good folks."



Steve Webb was Alabama's number one prospect and one of nine men Alabama assistant coach Jim Fuller signed on Signing Day, 1987.

After Fuller reboards the jet, the pilot wastes no time in getting in the air. Next on the flight plan is Montgomery's Danley Field, and Fuller is running late. It is 2:45 p.m. and Fuller is scheduled to sign lineman George Thornton at Montgomery's Jeff Davis High School at 3:30. A few minutes later the plane lands with a thud.

"Now you know what a real bumpy landing is like," Fuller says with a laugh.

Fuller makes it on time to Jeff Davis and after signing Thornton the coach rushes back to the airport for the final air leg of the day's journey. He is headed for Birmingham where two final signees await. Afterwards he must rent a car and drive back to Tuscaloosa.

"By the time we're through the pilots would have been on the job 14 hours," Fuller explains. "That's not legal. So we'll drive back. They don't put those kind of restrictions on football coaches. It's a good thing, too."

The Magic City tour begins in the northern suburb of Gardendale where Fuller signs Terry Langston. Fuller is especially pleased with this moment because it wasn't supposed to happen. Traditionally a poor student, Langston was expected to be a non-qualifier under the NCAA's Proposition 48 rule. But during the last term he pulled his grades up and scored a 20 on the ACT. His dream, once thought to be impossible, now is realized. (Fuller couldn't have known it then, but later the ACT would invalidate his test on a technicality and Langston has paid his own

way to Alabama so that he will not lose a year of eligibility, returning to the practice field in August, 1988, as a freshman.)

"That," Fuller says on his way out of Gardendale High School, "is what it's all about."

The last stop is at the home of Huffman High School placekicker Philip Doyle. It is just past 7 p.m. when Fuller walks into the home, where Doyle's parents have arranged a small gathering of family and friends to commemorate this special moment in their son's life.

Soon Fuller and the Doyles take care of the signing business, leaving plenty of time for eating cake, drinking coffee, and relaxing at the end of a grueling day.

He enjoys this stop most of all.

"I have become very close to these folks," Fuller says on the way out. "That's not just because of Philip, either. These are just good people. We shared some trying times during the transition."

"They didn't know if I would be around, and neither did I. We've been through a lot together."

Half an hour later the car radio taps a soft country beat as Fuller reaches into the back for a third hamburger.

"Pretty good burger," he says. "But, then," he adds between chomps, "anything would taste good now."

After months of work, Fuller has a good taste in his mouth.

He suddenly remembers something a parent in some distant city said earlier in the day.

"He said I could finish up today, then go home and take a week off," Fuller said, laughing. "Fat chance."

"Most people probably think that, but it doesn't work that way. I'll be back in the office tomorrow morning and I'll go out to see some prospects at some high school basketball games tomorrow night."

"We've got next year to worry about. By then we'll have all these juniors to replace. In this business there's no time to relax."

But there is time to worry about the consequences.

"You can't help but get tired of it," Fuller says as he takes a swig of Coca-Cola. "My little girl hardly knows my face. Here we are, gulping down hamburgers, driving home at 60 miles an hour at 8:30 at night after a 14- or 15-hour day. Normal people don't live this way."

"I can see a time five or six years from now that I just can't physically and mentally do this anymore. It's so draining. But right now . . ." He pauses, thinking perhaps of the success rather than the length of the day. "I love, it."

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Quiet! Genius At Work



Homer Smith is more than a football coach. He's a scholar, whose area of academic concentration is football offense. Barry Fikes Photo

by Donald F. Staffo

New offensive coordinator considered a football genius

It took Homer Smith about a year longer than he wished to achieve his goal, but now he's where he thinks he can "do my best piece of offensive work."

Homer Smith's best work could be very good indeed. He is considered by many knowledgeable football men to be the brightest offensive mind in the game. From time-to-time it is said that someone wrote the book on a subject. Smith is the author of *Handbook for Coaching the Football Passing Attack*, *Installing Football's Wishbone T Attack* (with Pepper Rogers) and *A Complete Offensive Playbook*.

Smith comes to Alabama as offensive coordinator and quarterback coach, the same position he held last year with the National Football League's Kansas City Chiefs. Prior to that he had 27 years of college coaching experience.

"I came here because I was attracted to Bill Curry, this football program and this university," said Smith. "I would like to do my best piece of offensive work at this time, and I saw a better opportunity for that here than in Kansas City."

It's not that Smith was unhappy or dissatisfied with the Chiefs. It's just that he liked what he knew about the Alabama situation, especially after the school hired Curry.

"I was interested in coming here when I was still at UCLA, before I went to Kansas City," he said. "I even called Alabama at that time, but found out there weren't any job openings." When Curry decided to move Rip Scherer, last year's offensive coordinator, into an administrative position he was able to go after Smith. Since Curry wanted Smith and Smith wanted to be at Alabama, it was not a difficult negotiating period.

He brings to Alabama an abundance of experience gained from a coaching career that began in 1958 and which has taken him from coast to coast. He has been a head coach (Davidson 1965-69, Pacific 1970-71 and Army 1974-78), as well as an assistant at Stanford, the Air Force Academy and twice at UCLA, as well as his one season in the NFL.

As a head coach Smith's teams were known for their high-powered offenses. At

Davidson his 1969 team set a major college record for points scored in a quarter (49), and also led the nation in punt return yardage en route to the Southern Conference Championship and a birth in the Tangerine Bowl. Smith was named District III Coach of the Year.

His teams at West Point, featuring quarterback Leamon Hall (who is now his son-in-law), who was sixth in the nation in passing and seventh in total offense, broke all the Academy's passing records. In 1977, Smith was selected Eastern College Coach of the Year.

But being in a business where they say you're hired to be fired, Smith, like so many coaches sooner or later, got the axe. He admits he was hurt by that.

"I went in to coaching with certain aspirations and I worked very hard to prepare myself," Smith related. "I worked my way to the top, and then lost my job. I thought my career was over."

Smith, who had already earned an undergraduate degree in finance at Princeton and an MBA at Stanford, then enrolled in Harvard Divinity School. He also tried to find a job in the world outside of sports, but without success. "So I went back to coaching to pay the bills," he said. "I just did what we all do in society, and that is to use your marketable skills to make a living."

Smith shouldn't have worried too much. Based on his track record, the man knows his business. After a year out of coaching, Smith in 1980 was appointed offensive coordinator at UCLA, where he developed a potent offensive attack that resulted in a 59-15-5 record and post-season invitations the last five years, including three trips to the Rose Bowl. UCLA won all five of those bowl games.

There he tutored Tom Ramsey, who became the school's all-time passing leader when he led the country in passing offense while finishing seventh in total offense. In 1982 the Bruin air attack shattered 20 UCLA passing records, including those for touchdowns, passes completed and completion percentage. He also coached Mike Sherrard, who ended his career with a record 128 catches, and quarterback Rick Neuheisel, who set an NCAA record for pass completion percentage (92.6) as he hit 25 of 27 against Washington.

It was with the Bruins that Smith also showed his versatility, when he installed the wishbone to take advantage of running backs

like Freeman McNeil, now with the New York Jets, Kermit Johnson, who rushed for more than 2,000 yards in two years, Eric Ball, the MVP of the 1985 Rose Bowl, Kevin Nelson, "Darren's little brother, who was a tremendous tailback for us," and Gaston Green, a Heisman Trophy candidate this year before being slowed by injuries. UCLA averaged over 470 yards and 42.7 points-per-game in his two years in the wishbone.

Having had a lot of experience working with top-notch running backs should help Smith at Alabama since he's inheriting one of the best in Bobby Humphrey, who is expected to be a leading Heisman candidate next season.

"From what I've seen of him on film, Bobby is a great football player who has more than just great ability," said Smith. "He finishes a run by putting something physical into the tackler, and that style of play is inspiring to the team."

Although Smith will be in charge of the entire offense, he will take particular responsibility for the quarterbacks.

"I've only seen 3 1/2 games on film so far, and I've only seen one of them (quarterbacks) play, and that's Jeff Dunn, and I'm very impressed with him," said Smith. "Jeff is obviously a great athlete who improved during the year and played his best in the last game of the year."

"I haven't seen the others, but there seems to be some healthy competition there," stated Smith who indicated that he has had most of his success with a one quarterback system. "We've experienced some problems when we've tried to alternate quarterbacks."

An example of that was last season at Kansas City when the Chiefs were 24th out of 28 teams in total offense. "We changed quarterbacks and did a lot of things wrong," stated Smith, who said he was sorry he didn't do a better job in that situation. "When you're having trouble, it's real hard to get better, but we managed to do that. We just worked like hell and in the last five games we played offensive football as well as anybody in the league, although we won only three of them (against Detroit, Los Angeles and Seattle)." The two the Chiefs lost were to Cincinnati by three in overtime, and to Denver by three, so Smith had the team moving in the right direction when he departed.

"I'm going to miss my job there and the players very much, especially because we played so well those last five games," Smith said. "I enjoyed the NFL and I leave with great admiration for what the (pro) players go through."

Switching back to college shouldn't be too

much trouble for Smith though, since he says college and pro offenses are not really different in design. "The difference is in the pressure the pro athletes are under, the pressure to play hurt, to entertain the fans, to win, and to survive," he said. "The pressure to get through 15 or 16 games with 45 players is tremendous. I don't know if that full story gets out sometimes. The game just has an entire different feel to it than the college game."

Technically-speaking though, it's about the same. "There's essentially no difference in pass protection, and very little difference in passing offense and running offense," Smith explained. "The pro offense is similar to college offense, but without the options. But then we used some options at Kansas City too. And the University of Miami looks very much like a pro offense because they don't run options."

Smith has come full circle after breaking into coaching at Stanford in 1958, moving on to the Air Force Academy three years later, and then to UCLA the first time in 1972 as offensive coordinator under Pepper Rogers.

"I was at UCLA for seven years and I just wanted to work at another school, a school that might have even greater potential than UCLA has," Smith said. "But both UCLA and Alabama have top level programs. When I was at UCLA under Terry Donahue, I felt I had the best assistant coaching job in college football. And Terry made it that way because he gave me the freedom to implement our passing offense, and I'm grateful to him for that. I feel the same way here."

Now 56, Smith has learned a lot from his travels. "Charlie Caldwell, my college coach, taught me the value of repetition," he said. "Coach (Paul) Bryant even mentioned it in his book that Coach Caldwell had had a lot of influence on him too."

(Smith was an outstanding player at Princeton, where as a fullback he set school records in rushing and scoring, was All-East and All-Ivy League as a junior and senior, captain of the team, and class president for three years. His biggest day as a collegian came in 1952 when he smashed school records by rushing for 273 yards and scoring four touchdowns against Harvard. He was also a track star.)

Smith said he first learned the intricacies of the passing game from Stanford Coach Jack Curtis, "who was a master at it." Air Force's Ben Martin left an impression because he could successfully compete against opponents who had bigger players. "Ben always believed you had a chance to win if you

worked hard enough," said Smith. "He was an upset artist if there ever was one. And he was an outstanding sideline coach who was continually figuring out a way to still win the game."

Smith said that Rogers was a brilliant offensive coach. "Of all of the people I've been around, he had the best grasp of how 11 off-enders work into 11 defenders," Smith stated.

Smith said that Donahue didn't lose games that he could have won. "He didn't let games slip away," said Smith. "He had a great feel for the degree of a gamble that an offense should be taking. He could be as wide-open as anyone. And he didn't worry about the score or how pretty the game was. He just won it."

"And we've (coaches) all been influenced by Bear Bryant," Smith stated. "I visited here twice to spend time with him and be around his program."

Smith said he came here because of Curry. "I'm attracted when a program has a man at the tiller like Bill," Smith said, "because he's interested in doing things properly. His sincerity is just a part of his life. He puts his players and assistant coaches first. He thinks about what is right and does it without primary concern for personal gain."

"Having Don Lindsey (Tide defensive coordinator) on the staff here also influenced my decision," said Smith. "I didn't know him well but I got to know his coaching well when he was at USC, and that was a factor."

From what he has gained from his mentors and colleagues Smith has come to the conclusion that coaching offense is not trying to be smarter than the opposing coach. "It's making your players better than their opponents because a smart coach can be cancelled out by another smart coach, and when that happens all you have left are the players," he explained.

"I've also learned that there are a lot of different ways to get the job done. The top five teams will probably play five different ways."

Smith said he does not plan abrupt changes at Alabama, "only evolutionary change. I want to evolve from what's already in place here," he said.

Smith admits that he'd like another crack at being a head coach, but insists his only objective at the moment is "to do his best piece of offensive work."

"If anyone wonders why I would come here I'd like them to recognize that 10,000 coaches would like to have this job, and I'm fortunate to have it," he said. "I feel I have a better job here than most head coaching jobs in college."





Jeff Dunn:

Year Makes A Difference

by Kirk McNair

He has gone from candidate to quarterback

"So," said Jeff Dunn, easing himself down into a chair in the interview room in Alabama's football building, "are you doing another article on the quarterbacks?" Not the quarterbacks, he's told. The Quarterback.

1 987 wasn't an election year, but it was a year in which there were several candidates for the important position of Alabama quarterback. In football, an important issue is often injury, and injuries proved instrumental in Jeff Dunn getting the only vote that matters in a quarterback race, the vote from Bama Head Coach Bill Curry to lead the offense.

A year ago Dunn was just one of six men who would battle in the spring for the vacancy created by the departure of two-year starter Mike Shula. This year he's the man a handful of others will be chasing.

Dunn didn't smile when he was reminded that a year ago one of the regular questions he received was along the lines of whether he would be willing to be switched to the secondary, or even if he expected to be a defensive back. "It could still happen," he said. "You never can tell." A year earlier he answered such inquiries with "I came here to play quarterback."

The reasons for the suspicion that Dunn might end up in the secondary were: a.) the presence of five other quarterback candidates, three who had been around awhile, and one of the others who was the most highly-recruited player in the South a year earlier; and b.) Dunn had been an outstanding defensive back before taking over his Greensboro (North Carolina) Page team's quarterback job and leading it to a 15-0 record and the state title.

Dunn saw no playing time in the second-

Jeff Dunn is the man behind center but the man who must be front and center for Alabama's offense to click. With a year under his belt he should be a much better performer in 1988.

Barry Fikes Photo



Alabama quarterback Jeff Dunn is best known for his passing arm, but when necessary he has shown that he can take it overland as well.

Barry Fikes Photo

any last spring and by the middle of the 1987 season he was Alabama's quarterback. At the end of that season, the Hall of Fame Bowl in Tampa against Michigan, he gave hope that Bama quarterbacking was in excellent hands.

Jeff Dunn's favorite subject is not Jeff Dunn. Although he recognizes that certain things go with being the quarterback at one of the nation's most prominent quarterback (and football) schools, he admits to being uncomfortable in interviews that center on himself.

However, he can't help but notice a change since taking over the job. "People recognize me more than they did in the past I guess," he said. "And I get a little more fan mail. But," he protests, "I'm just one of the guys."

Nevertheless, he's aware that he's following in the footsteps of a long list of great Alabama quarterbacks. "When I see all those pictures of the All-America quarterbacks here I can't help but be a little in awe of the responsibility that goes with being an Alabama quarterback," he said. "That tradition is one of the reasons I'm here. When I was a fresh-

man my roommate, Lee Ozmint, and I would occasionally talk about being at Alabama and one of the things we'd talk about is that if we'd gone somewhere else we'd always be wondering 'What if I had gone to Alabama?' So I think about the tradition here and that (making All-America) is something that would be nice, but I'd like to have an SEC and National Championship ring more than that. Anything personal that comes I'll take in stride, but it's not my main concern."

Dunn says that he tries to be a regular student ("I've done fair in school, but let's don't get into that") and likes "hanging around with the guys. I'm like everyone else. I go to class and I go out on Thursday night." (Bama students traditionally get a little head start on the weekend with Thursday the big night out.) And, no, he hasn't been involved in any late night scuffles.

The sophomore-to-be doesn't feel a quarterback should think of himself as special. "I've been brought up to treat everyone the way I'd want to be treated," he said. "I've never felt I should be treated different than Larry Rose or Willie Wyatt, those guys in the trenches who get less glory but who are giving 110 percent every day in practice and

games. And I'd like to believe that my teammates look at me as someone who thinks that way."

That may explain why Curry says that Dunn "plays quarterback like a linebacker." Dunn cringes a bit at that description. "That's Coach Curry's statement," he said.

Nevertheless, Dunn realizes that "a quarterback has to take charge, has to show the other guys to always have confidence. I think the quarterback is the man who has got to let his team know that it can go 80 yards in a minute if that's what it takes. You want them to know that you want it as bad as they do. I want them backing me as much as I'm backing them. This is a team game, and when that happens in a team game things come together."

Spring training is on the horizon. Although Dunn goes into this work in a far different situation than a year ago he doesn't plan to let it affect him. "I can't afford to relax and I don't plan to," he said. He refuses to guess at his primary competition—senior David Smith who started the first three games before being injured last year; senior Vince Sutton, a parttime starter in two of his previous

seasons; or Billy Ray, the much-ballyhooed classmate of Dunn's. "All of the guys here—even the ones you've never heard of—are great athletes. I spent last spring battling it out with Billy for number two. That's a tough situation, but that's part of football at a great institution. We all think the competition makes us better.

"Last year, and even my freshman year when I knew I was going to be redshirted, I went out there trying to get better.

"Now I've got to put last year behind me and try to get better and more consistent.

"Everyone's got a chance. That's what spring is for. Guys who haven't been heard of as well as the ones everyone knows have potential. My competition is everyone. But, of course, in a team game it's friendly competition. When David or Vince or Billy is in there, I'm cheering for him. And when I'm in there, they're cheering for me."

Dunn can see where he was fortunate to get where he is today. "The main thing was to get a chance and then, once I had the chance, to make something out of it," he said. "I felt I was very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time when David went down. You hate for it to happen that way, but that's the way football is. When the time came I was ready. I tried to keep my head in the game when I was on the sidelines. Then when I was in the game I tried to get the ball in the end zone."

Actually it took a bit more than just David Smith's broken collarbone against Vanderbilt for him to get his chance. He was in for five snaps as the only man other than Smith to see action at quarterback in Bama's 1987 season-opening victory over Southern Miss, then didn't play in Bama's win at Penn State or the loss to Florida. Vince Sutton took over for Smith in the Florida loss and again the next week after Smith was injured against Vanderbilt. Dunn did get a little playing time in the Southwestern Louisiana yawner, and was thrown to the fray late in the disaster at Memphis State.

His drop from number two to number three following the opener was due to illness. And it could have ended his fist varsity year. He spent a week in the hospital where doctors were on the verge of removing his appendix. However, they decided to wait it out and when it proved to be just a stomach virus Dunn was able to continue the season.

Every Alabama fan remembers Jeff Dunn becoming number one. He was the starter against Tennessee, and it was almost a dream start. He was effective running the option as he directed Bama to a touchdown on the Tide's first possession. And he closed out

the quarter with a never-to-be-forgotten play, hitting Pierre Goode on a school record 90-yard touchdown pass. He finished the day with 10 of 17 pass completions for 229 yards and nine rushes for 18 more as Alabama swamped the Vols.

"I thought it was a fair game," said Dunn. "I had too many mental mistakes, but I recognize that as part of maturing at the quarterback spot. It wasn't the total game I wanted."

He understands that he was viewed by many Alabama fans following that game as an outstanding quarterback. "From a fan's perspective, an Alabama fan's perspective, I'm sure it was good," he said. "But a fan only sees what happens on Saturdays. He doesn't see what we're trying to accomplish in the offseason program and on the practice field. Obviously I want our fans to be happy, but I'm not concerned about what they think about my performance. I'm human and I'm out there trying to do my best. Sometimes that's going to be good and sometimes it isn't. The important thing at the end is not whether I've had a good day statistically passing or running, but whether we've won.

"My job is to get the football into the end zone.

"You can have a good play, but immediately you've got to get that out of your mind and get on to the next one. It's the same with a bad play. What you look for in a quarterback is winning. I feel it's within my reach to be a consistent, winning quarterback."

Surprisingly, the record-setting pass to Goode is not his fondest memory of 1987. "Pierre did all the work on that," he said. "The thing that stands out most to me is the fact that I matured on and off the field. I learned a lot more about the game of football."

Statistically, Dunn did not have a great year. He finished the season hitting 36 of 87 passes, only 41.4 percent of his attempts completed. They were good for 500 yards and he had three touchdowns and six interceptions. He had 46 rushes for a net of 79 yards (144 gained, 65 lost).

Personally, he had his best game in the Hall of Fame Bowl. And to him? "Personally, that hurt," he said of the 28-24 loss to Michigan. "It left a bitter taste in my mouth and with all of our players."

Nevertheless, it wasn't his fault Bama couldn't hold on to the 24-21 lead. Dunn was instrumental in gaining that advantage for the Tide after Bama fell behind 21-3. He directed Bama to a late third quarter score and two fourth quarter touchdowns as he hit 23 of 40 passes for 269 yards and one touch-

down and rushed seven times for 13 yards.

He will admit that he showed improvement in the game. "We had a lot more time between Auburn and Michigan—a month—and that helped a lot," he said. "Like anything else, it would have been much better if we had won. I'd feel better about that.

"But I think I made a few steps towards being a better quarterback, which is not to say a total quarterback.

"I think any athlete, and particularly any quarterback, will ordinarily say that he needs to improve in the area of consistency," said Dunn. "I feel I made some progress during the year and I feel it's a reachable goal. I have a lot of confidence that I will be a consistent quarterback. But I've got to do it and that means a lot of hard work."

There will be a couple of other differences for Dunn when this spring rolls around. For one thing, he will be coming off knee surgery.

The arthroscopic procedure to remove cartilage was done in early January and by early February he was jogging and doing weightroom work to strengthen the knee. He had injured the knee in the final scrimmage before last year's opening game and reinjured it in the LSU game.

"I'm ahead of schedule as far as rehabilitation," Dunn said. "I spent a few days on crutches then got back to work. It already feels better than it did at times during the season. By the time spring training begins it should be better than it was when we played in the bowl game."

Dunn, who is 6-1, currently weighs 205, but expects to be a little closer to 210 when he finishes muscle work on his leg and he'd like to play at that weight.

Dunn will also be working with a new position coach and offensive coordinator this year. Homer Smith has taken over the duties held last year by Rip Scherer.

"I've had a chance to talk to him a little bit, but he has been mostly involved in recruiting and in getting situated here," said Dunn. "We haven't really talked football philosophy.

"But everything I've heard about him has been extremely positive. He has a great background. All the quarterbacks are excited about him and looking forward to working with him this spring.

"The way I look at it is Alabama only goes for the best, so if he wasn't the best he wouldn't be here."

If things go as he'd like—and as he intends—people will be saying the same thing about Jeff Dunn for the next three years.

Freshman Grows Up Fast

by Donald F. Staffo

A year out of high school, Cheatum has become a Tide regular

He's only a freshman, but you'd never know it by the time he has logged or the statistics he has compiled. Melvin Cheatum, a star for Winnsboro, Louisiana, High School this time a year ago is now a central figure for the Alabama basketball team. In fact, he's the only Tider who has started every game since Head Coach Wimp Sanderson began juggling the Bama lineup in mid-December.

Cheatum has been on the floor longer than any other Tider save junior star Michael Ansley, and one reason he's a couple of minutes per game behind Ansley is that Cheatum has been the victim of early foul trouble from time-to-time. He's also been averaging about 10 points and six rebounds a game, nothing that will earn All-Southeastern Conference honors, but numbers that almost assure him being named to the All-SEC Freshman team. And regardless of which (if any) honors come his way this season, his performance gives hope for his and Alabama's future.

"Anytime you have a freshman averaging double figures, he's doing a pretty decent job," states Alabama Assistant Coach David Hobbs. "He's come in here and played up to his ability level. His major strength is that the majority of the time Melvin plays hard on both ends of the floor. He runs the floor, tries to block shots, and gives a good effort on a consistent basis."

That's reflected in the stats too. Cheatum leads the team in blocked shots. He's had the most blocks in a game by an Alabama player (four), and he's done that three times—against Baptist, Georgia at home, and at LSU. "Blocking shots is just a matter of timing," explains Cheatum. "You can't just say I'm going to go out and block a lot of shots. You have to wait for the right situation to come up where you can get a block."

Because the Tide is young, inexperienced, and struggling this season, Cheatum, among the youngest and inexperienced of all, has

not only been thrust into battle early and for almost its entirety, but in different positions. He's played big forward, small forward, and center, which is certainly asking a lot from a rookie.

"It's easier to learn to play one position," says Hobbs, "but we've needed him to do certain things in certain situations. It's been harder on him, but he's moved where we've needed him."

Cheatum shrugs it off though, stating that Alabama is really playing with three forwards, since it doesn't have a true center. Maybe it doesn't, but Cheatum has sometimes drawn as his defensive assignment the opposing team's center, some of whom have been among the best in the country at the position.

"Dwayne Schintzius (Florida) was the toughest for me to play against," states Cheatum. "His physical size, his height and weight (7-2, 250) caused me some problems."

"Charles Smith and Jerome Lane (both from nationally-ranked Pittsburgh) were also tough. Smith because he's also very big (6-11) and a good athlete, and Lane because he knows how to use his size to his advantage to get rebounds."

Schintzius, Smith, and Lane—each a legitimate All-America candidate—are not your typical run-of-the-mill high school players that Cheatum was going against less than a year ago when he averaged 27.7 points and 13.1 rebounds a game en route to leading Winnsboro to the Louisiana state playoffs for the second straight year. His numbers were almost as good as a junior (21 points, 14 rebounds), so the Division I colleges were well aware of him. More than 75 schools courted Cheatum, including Auburn, Tennessee, LSU, Houston, Memphis State, and Penn State. He says he picked Alabama because he thought that the Tide would be a consistent Top Twenty team and that he might have a chance to play. He said he also liked the coaching staff and the players he met on his visit.

"I signed early but I really didn't know what to expect," explained Cheatum. "I wasn't really sure how I was going to fit in,

but I thought that I would have a good chance of playing since Alabama was losing four seniors. When I signed I wasn't expecting to start right away because Derrick (McKey) was still here. With him, I thought that we could be nationally-ranked."

McKey is gone, of course, leaving prematurely for the pros (Seattle Supersonics) after losing his remaining eligibility when he became involved with a sports agent. That hurt the Tide considerably, but it also opened the door for Cheatum to get much more playing time than he had anticipated. Had McKey been here for his senior season the best bet is that Cheatum would be the number one inside player off the bench, not a number one player.

"I didn't expect to play this much, I really didn't," said Cheatum. "But I've been very happy with my playing time. I'm just trying to play hard and make the best of the opportunity."

Cheatum had his best scoring night early in the season when his 18 points in the finals helped the Tide win the Hawaii Pacific Tournament Championship. His best rebounding effort (12) came in a victory over Mississippi Valley State. His statistics have not been quite as impressive against SEC opponents, but that's because the level of competition has jumped up a couple of notches. "These guys are much bigger, stronger, and they're better athletes," he pointed out.

At 6-8, 185 pounds Cheatum knows that he has to increase his bulk if he's going to be more effective against the Dwayne Schintziuses, Charles Smiths, and Jerome Lanes of the world. So he's planning on continuing a weight lifting program that he's currently on, picking up the intensity in the off-season.

"I'm not satisfied with my performance," he said. "I want to play as close to my potential as I can get. For me to do that I know I've got to get stronger. I've got to train really hard on the weights."

Hobbs agrees. "Melvin has progressed and done well, but his main weakness at this point is his strength. But that's not uncommon for a freshman. With most people coming into a Division I program from high school, that's the first thing that they have got to improve. Melvin is an 18-year-old playing

with 22-year-olds. When he improves his strength, all other areas of his game will also improve.

"That, along with maturity and if he continues to improve, should enable him to be a good player in our program. If he will do the things that he needs to do, he's got a bright future. How bright that future will be will be determined by the amount of time and effort he's willing to put in."

Hobbs says that he's never content with an individual. "I'm never 100 percent satisfied with any player. I always hope that they will be able to do this, that, and the other a little better."

Just from looking at Cheatum, it's tempting to compare him to McKey, who (although not as heavily recruited as Cheatum) entered Alabama with the same frail-looking physique but developed into a professional player.

"I wouldn't want to compare players," said Hobbs. "For one thing I wasn't even here for Derrick's freshman year so I didn't see him at that stage of his development. For another thing, it wouldn't be fair to either player. Derrick had a certain ability and maximized his potential. Melvin has a certain ability and must do the things I've mentioned to continue to improve to maximize his potential."

Right now though, Hobbs says that "We are looking to Melvin to play good defense, rebound both offensively and defensively, score a certain amount of points, and run the floor."

Cheatum is doing those things, acknowledging that he comes up short of his own expectations sometimes. "LSU (in Baton Rouge) was probably my worst game of the year so far," he stated. "I couldn't get in position for rebounds, the ball wasn't going in the basket for me, and I never felt comfortable or got in the flow of the game. I just had a bad game."

"I want to become more consistent in all areas of my game. And to do that I also need to work on my confidence so that I can better handle the ups and downs."

There's no question that Cheatum went through something of a midseason slump during the first half of the Southeastern Conference schedule. However, he broke out of it in the second half, including particularly strong performances in a loss at Kentucky and in wins over Vanderbilt and LSU in Tuscaloosa.

Cheatum has a grasp of what his coaches want from him that goes beyond his years. "No matter how the other parts of my game are going, my goal is always to play hard the



Alabama freshman forward Melvin Cheatum has emerged as one of the best first year men in the Southeastern Conference, ranking among the leaders in shooting, rebounding and blocking shots.

Barry Fikes Photo

entire time that I am on the court.

"As a starter, I feel like I should take charge out there, moreso than if I was coming in off the bench. I feel that I should be more responsible. I look at it as a challenge."

Cheatum is only a freshman, and if you watch him closely you'll see freshman mistakes. But with his attitude, his future, as well

as the team's, definitely looks brighter.

As basketball analyst Al McGuire once said, "The best thing about a freshman is that he becomes a sophomore."

That extends to junior and senior as well, and in Cheatum's case, perhaps beyond if he develops similar to McKey, the player he replaced.

Looking For A Title

by Kirk McNair

A dozen seniors make a 13th SEC championship a realistic goal

College athletics is a matter of competition, and there are several aspects to that competition. First of all is the competition for players, the recruiting wars. Second is on-the-field competition, the games. Finally, there is the competition within the team for starting jobs and playing time.

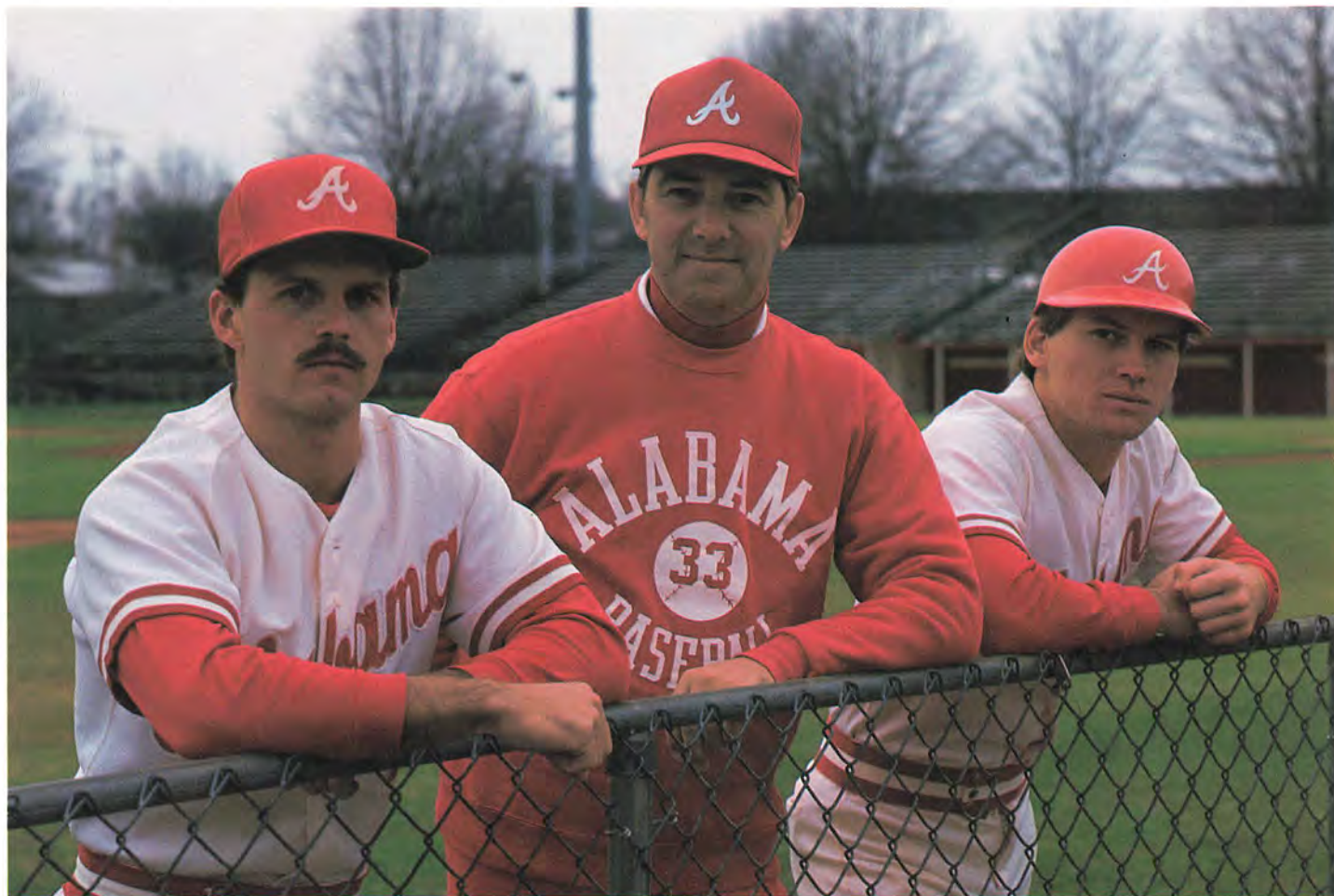
Year-in and year-out Alabama Head

Coach Barry Shollenberger and his staff have fared well in the recruiting competition. In fact, sometimes they have done too well, grabbing prospects who would be wooed by the professional game before finishing their Alabama careers; and, in some cases, before even beginning them. Nothing pleases Bama's head coach more than to have his players have an opportunity to make a living playing the summer game, but both 1986 and 1987 teams were sorely crippled by the pro draft.

Competition on the field is no problem. Alabama plays in the Southeastern Conference, home to half a dozen of the nation's top teams every year.

The third area of competition can be very good, and that appears to be the case this year. Alabama seems to have quality depth at virtually every position, and that should mean a quality team in 1988. Last year Bama was starting over, having lost nine starters from the 1986 team. It doesn't take much knowledge of baseball to realize that the loss of nine starters means rebuilding big time. Amazingly, 1987 Alabama came within the final weekend of the season of making the SEC Tournament before finishing with a thud and a 25-26 record. It was Shollenberger's first losing season since his inaugural 1980 team.

Although it was a frustrating year in many



Alabama Head Baseball Coach Barry Shollenberger is counting on the performance of his captains, second baseman Robert Fletcher (left) and catcher Clint Thompson (right) to lead the Crimson Tide to a possible Southeastern Conference championship in 1988.

Barry Fikes Photo



Deron White

respects, second half play gave Shollenberger cause for hope as his team showed marked improvement. "We did develop some better players during the second half," said the Tide coach.

The big news is a dozen seniors, which makes the possibility of a 13th SEC championship a realistic goal. (Mississippi State has nine titles, no other team more than half of Bama's 12 league pennants.) Shollenberger doesn't promise a title, but he does promise "We're going to be better than we were last year."

The schedule is also favorable. SEC teams play each other team one three-game series, meaning a team has five home series one year, four the next. This year Bama has five home series, against Florida, LSU, Georgia, Auburn and Mississippi State.

Baseball at the college level is no different than at any other in one respect. More often than not pitching is the difference. Alabama has two starters returning this year, seniors Mike Sodders and David Oropeza. "Ask any team in the SEC if they have two SEC pitchers on their staff returning and nine out of 10 will tell you that's a good sign taken by itself," said Shollenberger. "We have our number one and number two starters back. In most cases that is an indication you're in pretty good shape."

Sodders, a left-hander, is a rare four-year regular. He passed up the draft to return for his final season at Bama. Oropeza, a right-hander, was the surprise of the staff last year, becoming the Sunday starter and finishing with a 7-3 record and 88 strikeouts in 94 innings. Oropeza was held out of fall drills with a sore arm, but has looked good in spring work.

Top priorities are a third starter (SEC games are played in three-game sets, doubleheaders Saturdays, a single game Sunday) and at least one top relief pitcher. The latter

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Mike Sodders

is of utmost concern since last year Alabama lost 12 games when the opponent scored in its last at-bat.

The third starting spot is expected to go to one of three returning performers from last year—seniors Pete Brown and Meredith Sanford or sophomore Danny Beard. Beard had shoulder surgery during the fall. The newcomers are being counted on primarily as relief specialists. They include Lan Darty, Rodney Downey, Pete Hinkle, Scott Newsum, Tom Pavlock, Tony Pisciotta, Mike Soper, Kevin Moynah, Gary Hollingsworth (from the Bama football team) and Pat St. Clair, along with redshirt freshman Tommy Milstead.

A baseball axiom says that a team must be strong up the middle. That starts behind the plate, and Bama has good experience at catcher. Clint Thompson saw action in 49 games as a junior. Switch-hitting Tim Butt, who served as the Tide's designated hitter, saw action as the catcher in Thompson's absence. Both have the credentials to compete in the SEC. Other candidates at catcher are redshirt junior Wes Whitfield and sophomore transfer Mike DiChiara.

The only loss from Bama's infield of a year ago is second baseman Ralph Lusian, but the spot is being filled by an experienced hand. Robert Fletcher, who was Bama's third baseman last year, has moved over to second, the position he came to Alabama playing. He's backed by sophomore John Hardie.

Pat Monti will return as shortstop for the Tide and if he picks up where he left off last year that position will be in very good hands. "I wouldn't trade Pat for any shortstop in the SEC," said Shollenberger. He's backed by junior college transfer David Pinkston and freshman Philip Doyle (another player borrowed from the Tide football squad).

With Fletcher's move to second, third base has become a battleground with junior college transfer Cary Williams slightly ahead of



David Oropeza

junior Jeff Harmon and freshman Joe Alexczyk.

It may be that the best example of Alabama's depth is at first base. Al Sudduth, a senior this year, was the Tide starter in 1987 and was Bama's fifth-leading hitter (.293). However, he has found himself in a dogfight with redshirt freshman Hunter Plott (moved from catcher) and junior college transfer Brent Reese.

Last year Alabama's infield was more than just a defensive corps. Infielders scored 133 runs and knocked in 140.

Any discussion of the Bama outfield has to begin with the best player on Alabama's 1987 team, Deron White. The leftfielder led the Tide in hitting (59 hits and a .347 average), home runs (11) and runs batted in (47). Unfortunately, White was seriously injured in a summer league accident, breaking his leg in two places. He has made a good comeback, and is serving as the Tide's designated hitter, but it may be awhile before he is patrolling the outfield again. In his absence senior David Matsumura, who played last year, has taken over left.

Alabama also returns its other two starters from last year, centerfielder Omar Fernandez and rightfielder Ken Trusky. Fernandez, a senior, is the team's fastest player (he was second in stolen bases for the Tide last year). Trusky, a junior, was a solid defensive performer last year but has got to hit better (he was only .140 as a sophomore).

The Tide could get some immediate help in the outfield from transfer Jason Bridges, a senior who played at national power Arizona State last year. Other candidates are junior college transfers Nick Brunelli and Brian Roberts. Roberts was the top hitter among Alabama junior college players last year.

Shollenberger has his entire fulltime staff returning this year, Roger Smith for his ninth season, Mike Notaro for his fifth year and Steve Fleming for his second campaign.

The Building Continues

by Becky Hopf

Facilities, recruiting, coaching in Bama tennis arsenal

Armed with some of the best facilities in the country and two coaches who consistently recruit top players, Alabama's tennis program continues to build on the Crimson Tide tradition of athletics excellence.

Coach Tommy Wade's men's tennis team was ranked 19th nationally in the Intercollegiate Tennis Coaches Association poll released the week of February 15, while its women's team, coached by Karin Gaiser, was off to a quick 5-2 record with its only losses coming against second-ranked Florida and top 25-ranked Wisconsin.

Both teams have talented players on the roster. The men's team returns junior All-America Clinton Ferreira from Durban, South Africa. Ferreira compiled a 21-8 singles record playing at numbers three and four last season and teamed with John Stimpson at number one doubles. In 1985-86, Ferreira teamed with Gregg Hahn at number one doubles and the pair earned All-America status. Ferreira-Stimpson ranked number 34 among the nation's top 50 doubles tandems.

Also back for the men's team this season is junior Constantinos Efremoglou, who plays at number one singles for Alabama. Efremoglou divided time between number one and two singles last season and at one point in the season, the Athens, Greece, player had a seven-match win streak. He was a semifinalist at the Southeastern Conference Championships.

Sophomore Brad McMurray returns for his second season after posting a 22-9 freshman year playing primarily at number five. At midseason, McMurray, of Boynton Beach, Florida, won 15 of 16 matches. McMurray was a prep All-America out of Pope John Paul II High School.

Although he has missed several matches this spring due to a back injury, Mike Reiney will be heavily depended upon at the top of the Tide singles lineup. The senior from Jacksonville, Florida, played at one and two, and he combined with Efremoglou to make it to



Efremoglou

Beth Marrow

the semifinals at number three doubles at the Southeastern Conference Championships last season.

Reiney and Wynand van den Boom are the only seniors on the Alabama squad. Van den Boom compiled an 18-4 singles record playing mostly at six and won eight of his first nine matches, and teamed with Gavin Hewson at number three doubles where the pair collected an 11-3 record.

Top newcomers who are proving to be early season successes are freshmen Ellis Ferreira (younger brother of Clinton), Warren Rutenberg of Birmingham, Quebec's Jerome Fournire, and Bryan Cassis of Louisville, Kentucky.

Ferreira, who has another brother, Lionel, who plays tennis at Auburn, came into the Alabama program as the number two-ranked 18-and-under player in tennis talent-rich South Africa. Fournire is the number two-ranked 18-and under singles player in Canada and is a Canadian national champion. Cassis was a Kentucky state finalist in doubles in 1986.

On the women's team, Beth Marrow returns as its top player, and, despite an early spring-season ankle injury, is expected to play even stronger this season as the Tide's number one singles player. Marrow, who prepped at Sebring, Florida, High, but now resides in Brockport, New York, broke into Alabama's lineup at number two singles early in her freshman season and was elevated to number one early in the year. Her biggest collegiate win came when she upset the SEC's defending number one singles champion, Georgia's Jane Cohodes, last season. Marrow, a sophomore now, did that feat in the spring opener, which was also her debut at number one singles.

Marrow's twin sister, Rachel, returns as well after compiling a 24-13 freshman record at five singles and a 20-14 number two doubles record. This season, the pair have been teaming together at one doubles. During the summer of 1987, the two reached the semifinals of the National Amateur Hardcourts in doubles.

Sophomore Michelle Morton, who alternated singles positions between two, six and three before settling in at three, is back for her second season and has recorded early spring season success. Morton, of Bryanston, South Africa, was ranked second in Johannesburg.

Linda Boedecker of Mississauga, Ontario, is the Tide's only senior. Boedecker is the team's captain. Last season she started the year at four singles for 12 matches, then moved up to three. Boedecker qualified for and played in the prestigious Rolex-I.T.C.A. Regional Championship.

Sarasota, Florida, junior Kay Thayer has been playing at number two this spring, a step up from where she played last season. Thayer was 7-2 the first nine matches last spring and, along with Boedecker, qualified for the Rolex-I.T.C.A. Regional Championship. She won the role as the Tide's number three player her freshman year.

Another junior, Aoife Wilson of Dublin, Ireland, joins the Tide for her first season and has worked her way into the top six. Wilson transferred to Alabama from national champion Tyler (Texas) Junior College where she was an All-America in both 1986 and 1987. Going into the season, Wilson ranked 22nd in the nation.

Sophomores Martelle Coetzer and Susan Sherman return. Coetzer, of Hoopstad, South Africa, had a 6-3 singles record at five and six last year, and Sherman is a doubles specialist for the Tide who played at two and three doubles. She is from Homewood.

Alabama has two freshmen on the squad, Carolyn Tregoning of Randfontein, South Africa, and Molly Fink of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Tregoning joined the team in January and has made an immediate impact, working her way into the top six singles lineup. She and Morton combine for a strong doubles tandem. Tregoning's father is a Harvard man. Fink's University High School was the 1985 Louisiana state tennis champion, and Fink was a three-time team MVP. She did not compete her senior year because of torn ligaments in her ankle.

Tradition Plays A Role

by Scott Turner

Men have a veteran team, women still flush with 1987 success

Tradition plays a big role in 1988 Alabama golf expectations. On the men's side, the big story is that Bama will be playing its last season under Head Coach Conrad Rehling, the famed "Teacher of Champions" who is retiring June 30. On the women's side, third-year Coach Dick Spybey faces a rebuilding year on the heels of last year's ninth place finish in the NCAA Championships.

Rehling, a member of the NCAA Golf Coaches Hall of Fame, has been the Bama coach for 16 years and a college coach for 31 years.

Bama has reason to be optimistic in Rehling's last year. Three of the top five players from last year's team, which finished third in the Southeastern Conference championships, return. Although the Tide's first tournament of the spring was a disaster, Bama finishing last in a quality 18-team field in the National Collegiate in Miami, Rehling excused the performance on the basis of the terrible weather that plagued the tourna-

ment. "We had had bad weather in Tuscaloosa and missed a lot of practice time and were just not prepared for what we faced in Miami," said Rehling. "Now that we've had good practice time we should play well."

The Tide is led by sophomore Spike McRoy of Huntsville. McRoy finished third in last year's SEC championships and will rank among the favorites for this year's individual title. He averaged 73.8 in fall play. Bama's number one player last year, junior Sean Paccetti of Palatka, Florida, struggled in the fall but has a good track record. "For us to have a good spring we need for some players to take charge and play consistently," said Rehling. "We haven't had that, especially from Sean, who is capable of shooting par or better each time he plays."

Bruce Willette, a junior from Roanoke, Virginia, was also among Bama's top players in 1987. Senior Tony DiRico of Milton, Massachusetts, tied McRoy as he averaged 73.8 in the fall and could be a big plus for Bama in his final season.

Another player who could challenge for the travel squad role is sophomore John Pochis of Crystal River, Florida. Other Tide returnees are sophomore Kyle Bellamy of High Point, North Carolina; sophomore Tracy Lentz of Trinity; and redshirted freshman Danny Spybey (brother of the Bama women's coach) of Columbus, Ohio.

Rehling calls two freshmen, Henry Diana of Youngstown, Ohio, and Gary Wignington of Anniston, "two outstanding freshmen. By the end of the year they could both in our lineup. They could give our team an interesting combination of youth and experience."

On the women's side, Spybey knew he faced a rebuilding job this year. Alabama lost its top four players from the squad that won four tournaments en route to a ninth place national finish in 1987. Only junior Judi Schneider of Helena, Montana, is returning from that NCAA team.

Nevertheless, says Spybey, "Our goal is to continue to play competitive golf and maintain the winning program that has been established."

Along with Schneider, only senior captain Mary Dacumos (Birmingham) and sophomore Andrea Vescovo (West Memphis, Arkansas) return from last year's squad. Senior Charlene Tatz of Scotch Plains, New Jersey, has returned to the team after a year's absence. The rest of the roster is made up of incoming freshmen—Lynn Bradley of



Judi Schneider

Huntsville, Kris Meyer of Memphis and Leslie Spalding of Billings, Montana.

Despite the inexperience, Alabama had a reasonably good fall record.

The key is Schneider. The former Montana state prep champion placed in the top ten in two tournaments for Bama as a sophomore. "Judi is the most experienced player on the squad and we have to rely on her leadership this year," said Spybey. "She's coming off a good, solid performance as a sophomore so I'm expecting her to have a good year this year."

"Andrea continues to impress me by how hard she works. She is developing into a good golfer, so we're expecting some good things from her. Mary has come a long way since her arrival at Alabama. She's improved a lot and will be counted on as the team captain."

Nevertheless, Spybey must count on the freshmen. Fortunately, he says, "We have one of the best recruiting classes we've had since I've been here. All three girls are top-notch golfers and are good students. They are strong mentally and should contribute to our program. It will be a challenge for our freshmen to play against the type of competition we play."

Both Bradley (1985 and 1987) and Spalding are former state prep champions.



Spike McRoy

BAMA SCORECARD

Looking Ahead

There's little doubt that some followers of football recruiting have a tough time going cold turkey when signing day finally arrives. With no more 17-and 18-year-old high school players to agonize over, what's a body to do?

How about start worrying about next year's crop?

Alabama coaches have already begun the process of evaluation of next season's seniors, but this is not by any means an Alabama list of 1989 prospects. These are players whose junior season performances merited enough attention to be placed on 'BAMA's list of players to watch. By the time next winter's recruiting is in full swing, the actual list of top prospects will be altered by any number of circumstances, including performance, injuries and academics.

Rest assured that 'BAMA does not know how Alabama's football staff feels about these upcoming prep seniors or how these players feel about Alabama and no one at this office will begin to take notice of that until after next year's bowl game, so don't waste money on a telephone call yet.

Here is our first guess at the top upcoming high school football seniors in Alabama (alphabetically):

William Barger, lineman, 6-4, 240, Birmingham John Carroll; Courtney Bonner, offensive tackle, 6-5, 250, Hartselle; Roderick Bradford, linebacker, 6-4, 205, Mobile Davidson; Chris Chapman, linebacker, 6-3, 225, Jacksonville; Gary Clayton, quarterback, 6-1, 175, Birmingham Parker.

John Copeland, defensive lineman, 6-4, 225, Valley of Fairfax; Lemanski Hall, quarterback-defensive back, 6-2, 197, Valley of Fairfax; Marc Johnson, wide receiver, 6-1, 170, Cherokee County of Centre; Deon McLeon, defensive tackle, 6-1, 235, Carroll of Ozark; Jason Merchant, defensive end, 6-4, 210, Citronelle.

Roosevelt Patterson, center, 6-5, 260, Mobile Vigor; Eddie Pressley, running back, 5-10, 175, Birmingham Woodlawn; Charles Russell, wide receiver, 6-4, 180, Birmingham Ensley; Junior Sewell, running back, 6-1, 215, Abbeville; Tobie Sheils, center, 6-3, 230, Fairhope.

Orlando Truitt, wide receiver, 6-3, 170, Birmingham Parker; J.J. Walker, wide receiver-running back, 6-0, 180, Daleville; Gregory Watson, defensive lineman, 6-5, 240, Coffee of Florence; Stan White, quarterback, 6-2, 185, Birmingham Berry; Darrell Williams, running back, 5-10, 175, Mobile Vigor.

Turf Stuff

Among the many things on which Alabama and Auburn have not seen eye-to-eye over the years is the surface on which football games should be played.

Alabama began playing its games in Tuscaloosa on AstroTurf in the late 1960s and in Birmingham on various brands of artificial turf in 1970. Auburn, as almost every agriculture school as well as many others, has stuck with grass. The primary advantages of artificial turf are in upkeep and in making weather less a factor in games. There's no question that the game is faster and cleaner on artificial turf. The primary advantage that has been listed for playing on grass has been safety.

Now a new NCAA study indicates that artificial turf may be a safer football surface than grass.

The NCAA studied 15 Division 1A football teams last season and found "that, if anything, natural grass causes a higher overall rate of injury and a much higher rate of serious knee injuries, especially to defensive players."

The study does not claim to be conclusive and points out that numerous previous studies have also been inconclusive, some indicating artificial turf causes more injuries, some indicating the opposite. For the most part, studies showing artificial turf to be more dangerous have gotten far more publicity.

Ursula R. Walsh, NCAA director of research and data processing, said defensive players are being hurt more on natural grass, while running backs and wide receivers are at a higher risk on artificial turf.

Players on grass were found to be far more likely to suffer torn ligaments and cartilage, contusions and concussions, while players on artificial fields were more likely to suffer fractures and nerve injury. Overall there were 171 serious injuries to players on those 15 teams when they were playing on grass, 145 when playing on artificial surfaces. The most common serious injury in football is the knee injury. This study found 12 serious knee injuries from games played on grass, only four from games played on artificial turf.

Coleman Coliseum

Alabama opened up a 51-37 halftime lead against Auburn in Memorial Coliseum and then held on for an 82-77 victory over the Tigers in Coleman Coliseum February 27. No, the teams and the 15,000 spectators didn't change locations. But at halftime the coliseum was rededicated in honor of Jeff Coleman.

Ironically, Coleman was probably the only one in the building (or with Alabama ties) who had reservations about the renaming of the coliseum. For 60-plus years it has been good business for The University to listen to what Coleman has to say, but in this case his protest was in vain.

No one has been more active in more areas for The University than has Coleman. He is probably best known today as the only person who has seen all 40 of Alabama bowl games, but he has been extremely active both in and out of athletics throughout his association with The University. He was a student manager and later secretary under Coach Wallace Wade, then athletics business manager under Frank Thomas, at the same time serving as business manager of The Supply Store and University purchasing agent. He was director of alumni affairs for 20 years.

But more than his years of service, Jeff Coleman was conscious that The University of Alabama always do the right things. By dedicating the coliseum to him, The University has once again done that.



Jeff Coleman



Conrad Rehling

Rehling Clubhouse?

There are several more buildings around the Alabama athletics complex that could bear names in years to come, but one that might be ready for an immediate dedication is Bama's spacious clubhouse at University Golf Course. When Conrad Rehling came to Alabama as director of golf 17 years ago the Tide had a nine-hole facility with a small out-building serving as the clubhouse. The course has since been named Harry Pritchett Golf Course and it is now an 18-hole facility with a 5,500-square foot clubhouse, driving range, two practice greens, practice bunker and pitching range.

Rehling will retire from his position June 30.

He came to Alabama from West Florida, where he had coached two years after a 22-year career as head coach at Florida. He was labeled "Teacher of Champions" by *Golf Digest* magazine and is a member of the NCAA Golf Coaches Hall of Fame. He has authored hundreds of articles on golf technique and is in great demand for clinics and for private instruction by touring professional players.

Although there has been no hint as to who will be Rehling's successor, the man who will 'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/MARCH '88

choose him knows something about the game. When Bama Athletics Director Steve Sloan was a young head football coach, a popular trivia question was "What was Steve Sloan's first head coaching job?" Most people would answer "Vanderbilt," but the answer was he was Alabama's golf coach in the late 1960s while also serving as a Tide assistant football coach. Sloan is also an outstanding amateur player in his own right.

Lots Of Lettermen

Alabama Head Coach Bill Curry has announced 73 lettermen for 1987, including four dozen or so who are scheduled to return for this season. The breakdown by classes was 22 seniors, 24 juniors, 12 sophomores and 15 freshmen. At least two and possibly three of the juniors will not be on the team this fall. Cornerback Shannon Felder and noseguard Darryl Whetstone have already announced that they will not return for their senior seasons, joining redshirted freshman Russ McCullough in leaving the team. The status of offensive tackle Joe King, who was suspended for the fourth time in his career prior to the Hall of Fame Bowl game in Tampa, has not been announced.

Seniors lettering last season were Larry Abney, Doug Allen, Jeff Bentley, Phillip Brown, Bill Condon, Earlando Courtney, Craig Epps, Darrel Fuhrman, Kerry Goode, Alan Lopez, Bill Lutz, Darrell Martin, Lydell Mitchell, Carlos Robinson, Randy Rockwell, Angelo Stafford, Rory Turner, T.J. Weist, Chris White, Clay Whitehurst, Vernon Wilkenson and Bo Wright.

The 1987 juniors are George Bethune, David Casteal, Tommy Cole, Howard Cross, Felder, John Fruhmorgen, Greg Gilbert, Bobby Humphrey, Gene Jelks, Kermit Kendrick, King, Butch Lewis, Chris Mohr, Greg Payne, Todd Richardson, Larry Rose, Willie Shephard, Anthony Smith, David Smith, Vince Sutton, Derrick Thomas, Steve Turner, Whetstone and Steve Wilson.

Sophomores are Charles Abrams, Marco Battle, Danny Cash, John Cassimus, Van Davis, Pierre Goode, John Mangum, Lee Ozmint, Thomas Rayam, Wayne Shaw, Willie Wyatt and Mike Zuga.

Freshmen are Terrill Chatman, John Davis, Philip Doyle, Jeff Dunn, Spencer Hammond, Byron Holdbrooks, David Lenoir, Trent Patterson, Lamonde Russell, Roger Shultz, Mike Smith, Robert Stewart, Alan Ward, Lorenzo Ward and Woody Wilson.

Volunteer Leaves

Alabama's volunteer assistant football coach, John Thompson, is returning to his former position as defensive coordinator at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Thompson coached bandits and rovers and was heavily involved with the kicking game for Bama last year.

MARCH '88/BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide

One of Alabama's graduate assistant coaches may move up to the volunteer position.

"John has done a fine job for us," said Bama Head Coach Bill Curry. "He has the opportunity to go back home and what's so appealing is that his wife, Teresa, will be an assistant coach for the women's basketball team."

Spring Dates

Once upon a time Alabama spring football practice dates were announced in advance with the qualifying phrase "weather permitting." With an indoor practice field, Alabama no longer has to be too concerned with the weather which means that spring training will start March 26 and conclude April 27. The A-Day game has already been announced as to be played at 3 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at Birmingham's Legion Field.

Having the game in Birmingham (because the expansion and renovation of Bryant-Denny Stadium will not have been concluded) means that Bama will not be able to have upcoming senior football prospects on campus for the game. However, any recruiting disadvantages that have resulted from the Tide being unable to utilize the stadium for the past year will be offset when it finally is finished.

Swimmers Rebuilding

There was no question that this would be a rebuilding year for Alabama's men's and women's swimming and diving teams. The Tide men finished fifth and the women sixth in the Southeastern Conference championships, despite it being a relatively weak year in the SEC. While Bama Head Coach Don Gambriel was disappointed in the final placements, he wasn't dissatisfied with effort. "We just don't have the numbers we need to finish higher," he said.

While Alabama's men have a 12th place national ranking and the women are rated 19th, Gambriel knows that is not realistic in terms of the NCAA Championships. "We may not score a point in the women's meet and we just hope the men can stay in the top 20 so we don't have to rebuild from too far down," he said.

The bulk of Alabama's points have come from freshmen and sophomores, the exception being Bama distance swimmer Franck Iacano, a junior. "I'm very, very pleased with Franck," said Gambriel. "He has really matured into a great team man."

Iacano, incidentally, has been named captain of the French National Team.

Alabama qualifiers for the NCAA Cham-

pionships include only breastroker Kelly Purcell for the women and Iacano, breastroker Chris McDaniels, backroker-individual medlyst Eric White, sprinter Jon Olsen, butterflyer Jim Askervold and the relay teams for the men.

Divers qualify separately with Tami Merrill and Leigh Ann Fleshmann for the women and men Scott Pomerleau and Mark Rourke eligible for the qualifying meets.

Round Robin Proposed

Alabama Head Coach Don Gambriel has spearheaded an effort to have annual dual meet round robin competition among Southeastern Conference teams and the league's swimming coaches have made that recommendation to the athletics directors. The athletics directors are expected to consider the proposal at a meeting during the SEC Basketball Tournament in Baton Rouge. Eight schools have swim teams (Ole Miss and Mississippi State the exceptions). The SEC currently has round robin competition in basketball and baseball.

Alabama currently has home dual meets scheduled with Florida, Auburn, Kentucky and Vanderbilt and owes meets at Georgia, LSU and Tennessee, so it will be a simple matter for the Bama schedule to be made on a round robin format.

Gambriel also announced the teams he has invited for next season's Crimson Tide National Invitation Tournament—Arizona State of the Pac-10, Nebraska of the Big Eight, Texas A&M of the Southwest, Indiana of the Big 10, Princeton of the Ivy, Clemson of the Atlantic Coast and independent Miami.

Sports Information Staff

Alabama has yet another assistant athletics director, approximately its seventh, as Bama has restructured its sports information office. Steve Townsend, who has served as information director for the Southeastern Conference since 1983 and is regarded as one of the brightest men in the business, will take over as assistant athletics director for public relations at Bama following the SEC basketball tournament. Prior to joining the conference office Townsend was editor of *Tiger Rag*, the specialty publication covering LSU, his alma mater.

Townsend has picked another highly-regarded Louisianan as sports information director. Larry White, who formerly served as associate sports information director at Alabama before becoming assistant athletics director and sports information director at SMU, has returned to The Capstone after four years in Texas.

Wayne Atcheson serves as associate sports information director, Becky Hopf as assistant.

ALABAMA'S SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES

Baseball

7	Western Kentucky 0
9	Western Kentucky 3
8	Samford 1
12	Alabama State 2
18	Indiana State 6
9	Indiana State 4
March 2	Alcorn State
March 3	Alcorn State
March 5	Morehead State
March 6	Morehead State
March 8	Tennessee State
March 9	Tennessee State
March 12	@ Tennessee (2)
March 13	@ Tennessee
March 15	@ Nevada-Las Vegas
March 16	@ Nevada-Las Vegas
March 17	@ Nevada-Las Vegas
March 19	Florida (2)
March 20	Florida
March 22	Samford
March 23	Middle Tennessee
March 24	Middle Tennessee
March 26	@ Kentucky (2)
March 27	@ Kentucky
March 30	Jackson State
March 31	Jackson State
April 2	LSU (2)
April 3	LSU
April 5	@ South Alabama Tourney
April 6	@ South Alabama Tourney
April 9	Georgia (2)
April 10	Georgia
April 12	Auburn @ Huntsville
April 13	South Alabama
April 14	South Alabama
April 16	@ Vanderbilt (2)
April 17	@ Vanderbilt
April 18	@ Middle Tennessee
April 19	@ Middle Tennessee
April 23	Auburn (2)
April 24	Auburn
April 27	Auburn @ Dothan
April 30	@ Ole Miss (2)
May 1	@ Ole Miss
May 7	Mississippi State (2)
May 8	Mississippi State
May 12-15	SEC Tourney @ Starkville

Men's Tennis

	Crimson Tide Classic
5	Southeastern Louisiana 2
5	Florida State 1
4	Mississippi State
5	National Indoor @ Louisville
2	Utah 1
4	Texas 5
	West Virginia 5
9	Southern Miss 0
March 2-5	Corpus Christi Team Tourney
March 12	@ Southwestern Louisiana
March 13	@ LSU
March 15	Murray State
March 24-27	Blue-Gray @ Montgomery
April 2	@ Tennessee
April 9	Vanderbilt
April 10	Tennessee Tech
April 15	@ Mississippi State
April 17	Kentucky
April 20	Memphis State
April 23	Georgia
April 25	@ Ole Miss
April 30	@ Auburn
May 10	Florida
May 13-15	SEC @ Lexington
May 20-28	NCAA @ Athens

Men's Golf

Feb. 5-7	National Collegiate Invitational
	@ Miami, Fla. (18th of 18 teams)
Feb. 20-22	Florida State Classic
	@ Tallahassee, Fla.
March 15-16	Southwestern Louisiana Cajun Classic
	@ Lafayette, La.
March 25-27	Alabama-Southeastern Invitational
	@ Montgomery
April 15-17	Alabama-Jerry Pate Invitational
	@ Pensacola, Fla.
April 22-24	Georgia Southern-Chris Schenkel Invitational
	@ Statesboro, Ga.
April 29-May 1	Auburn Invitational
	@ Opelika
May 12-14	SEC Championships
	@ Florence

Men's Track

March 19	Cajun Classic, Lafayette, La.
March 25-26	Alabama Relays
April 2	Crimson Classic Invitational
April 8-9	Texas Relays, Austin
April 16	Tyson Invitational, Fayetteville, Ark.
April 23	Eastern Invitational, Tallahassee
April 29-30	Drake Relays, Des Moines, Iowa
May 12-15	SEC Championships, Auburn
May 20-21	Gatorade Classic, Knoxville
May 28	Last Chance Invitational, Tallahassee
June 1-4	NCAA Championships, Eugene, Oregon
June 16-18	TAC Championships, Tampa

Women's Tennis

9	Samford 0
9	Jeff State 0
	Red & White Classic
5	Arkansas 4
6	Ohio State 3
3	Wisconsin 6
2	@ Florida 4
7	@ South Florida 2
9	Georgia Tech 0
6	LSU 3
4	@ Mississippi State 5
March 11-17	Las Vegas Invitational
	(UNLV, Western Michigan, Furman, Notre Dame, Colorado)
March 25	@ Tennessee
March 26	@ Vanderbilt
April 2	Auburn
April 9	@ Georgia
April 11	Austin Peay
April 16	Kentucky
April 22	Ole Miss
April 24-May 1	SEC @ Baton Rouge

Women's Golf

Feb. 19-21	Lady Gator Invitational
	@ Gainesville, Fla. (8th of 18 teams)
March 4-6	Troy State-Hudson Invitational
	@ Eufaula
March 18-20	LSU Invitational
	@ Baton Rouge, La.
April 8-9	Furman Lady Paladin
	@ Greenville, S.C.
April 14-17	South Alabama Invitational
	@ Gulf Shores
April 22-24	Women's Southern Intercollegiate
	@ Athens, Ga.
May 6-8	SEC Championships
	@ Pensacola, Fla.

Women's Track

March 19	Cajun Classic, Lafayette, La.
March 25-26	Alabama Relays
April 2	Crimson Classic Invitational
April 8-9	Texas Relays, Austin
April 16	Tyson Invitational, Fayetteville, Ark.
April 23	Eastern Invitational, Tallahassee
April 29-30	Drake Relays, Des Moines, Iowa
May 12-15	SEC Championships, Auburn
May 20-21	Gatorade Classic, Knoxville
May 28	Last Chance Invitational, Tallahassee
June 1-4	NCAA Championships, Eugene, Oregon
June 16-18	TAC Championships, Tampa

ALABAMA'S WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULES

Men's Basketball

93	Athletes In Action (exhibition) 89
	@ Hawaii Rainbow
85	New Mexico State 84
91	Hawaii-Pacific 80
83	Central Michigan 80
78	Southern Cal @ B'ham 69
67	@ South Carolina (ESPN) 73
86	Northeast Louisiana 66
69	Montana State 77
86	Mississippi Valley 66
55	@ Arkansas (USA) 80
	@ Florida Citrus
65	Central Florida 54
51	Pittsburgh 87
55	Baptist 41
57	Georgia (ESPN) 59
56	@ Mississippi State 59
55	Kentucky (ESPN) 63
60	@ Vanderbilt 76
52	@ LSU (ESPN) 67
73	Ole Miss (SEC-TV) 66
74	@ Auburn 84
82	Tennessee 69
64	Florida 74
54	@ Georgia 67
61	Mississippi State 48
68	@ Kentucky (SEC-TV) 82
88	Vanderbilt 77
72	LSU (SEC-TV) 59
47	@ Ole Miss 64
82	Auburn (SEC-TV) 77
March 2	@ Tennessee (SEC-TV)
March 5	@ Florida
March 10-13	SEC Tourney @ LSU

Women's Basketball

103	@ Tennessee State 56
	@ Bowling Green Invitational
80	Arizona 74
63	Western Kentucky 66
	@ Investors Classic
58	Virginia 81
80	St. Joseph's 69
88	@ Livingston 72
76	@ Alabama-Birmingham 67
86	Montevallo 62
88	Southern Miss 76
81	@ New Mexico State 102
64	@ Texas Tech 74
67	Georgia 84
74	Kentucky 54
83	Arkansas State 64
81	LSU 79 (OT)
70	@ Tennessee 97
57	Auburn 88
70	@ Florida State 64
75	@ Florida 53
97	Middle Tennessee 58
82	Alcorn State 63
77	@ Mississippi State 73
84	Union 78
65	@ Vanderbilt 71
87	@ Ole Miss 86
88	Alabama State 57
March 4-8	SEC @ Albany, Ga.

Men's Swimming

107	@ Florida State 110
69	@ Louisville 32
120	@ Notre Dame 92
	Crimson Tide NIT
73.5	Kansas 39.5
78	Iowa 62
58	Arizona 55
64	Virginia 49
67	Tulane 45
59	Delta State 22
67	Northeast Louisiana 46
133	@ Kentucky 79
51	@ Auburn 62
46	@ Florida 65
	SEC Championships—Fifth
April 7-9	NCAA @ Indianapolis

Gymnastics

187.75	Auburn 181.6
184.35	@ Penn State 180.55
184.35	New Hampshire 174.1
187.10	@ LSU 187.10
	Red & White Classic
	Alabama 188.95, Georgia 188.95, Utah
	186.85, Wisconsin, 180.15, Minnesota 177.30
188.75	Arizona State 185.65
186.00	@ Kentucky 180.15
186.00	Iowa State 175.35
March 4	North Carolina
March 6	Bulldog Invitational @ Athens
March 10	@ Arizona State
March 14	@ Utah
March 26	SEC Championships
March 31	@ Auburn
April 9	NCAA Regions @ LSU
April 22-23	NCAA @ Utah

Women's Swimming

98	@ Florida State 119
63	@ Louisville 41
127	@ Notre Dame 88
	Crimson Tide NIT
95	New Orleans 43
78	Iowa 62
72	Arizona 68
45	Virginia 68
69	Tulane 39
56	Delta State 21
56	Northeast Louisiana 30
83	@ Vanderbilt 56
136	@ Kentucky 81
67	@ Auburn 73
53	@ Florida 79
	SEC Championships—Sixth
March 17-19	NCAA @ Austin

Men's Track

Jan. 22-23	East Tennessee Invitational
Jan. 29-30	Florida Invitational
Feb. 5	Millrose Games
Feb. 12-13	Huster Invitational
	SEC Championships—Sixth
March 5	Last Chance @ Gainesville
March 11-12	NCAA @ Oklahoma

Women's Track

Jan. 22-23	East Tennessee Invitational
Jan. 29-30	Florida Invitational
Feb. 5	Millrose Games
Feb. 12-13	Huster Invitational
	SEC Championships—Second
March 5	Last Chance @ Gainesville
March 11-12	NCAA @ Oklahoma

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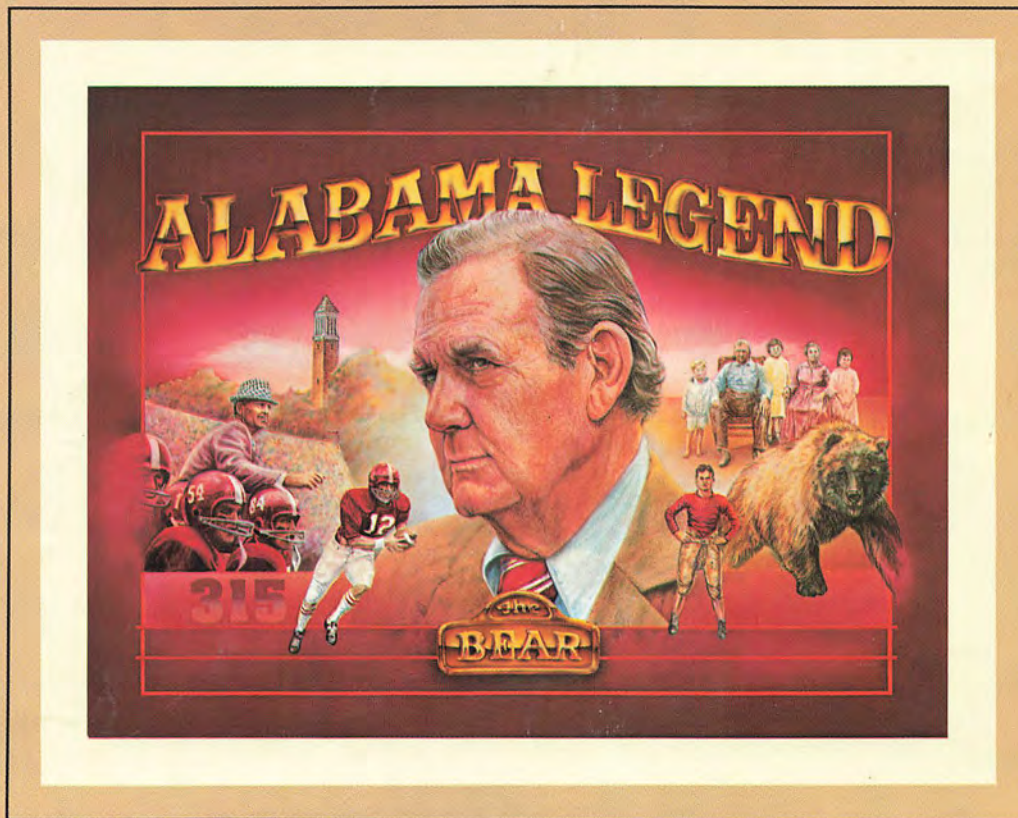
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